University of Alberta

Containment or Rollback?
The CIA in Chile 1970-1973

By

Kristian C. Gustafson ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History

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17 September 2002

If total isolationism is no answer, total
interventionism is no answer, either.
In fact, the clear, quick, definable,
measurable answers are ruled out.
In this twilight of power, there is no quick
path to a convenient light switch.
--Adlai E. Stevenson (1900-1965)

For Kjerstin and Sebastian
Who Have More Than Just
Put Up With Me

Abstract

From 1970 to 1973, the CIA and other branches of the U.S. Government undertook operations against the elected Marxist government of Salvador Allende in Chile. By use of covert activity, the CIA attempted to prevent first the election, then the inauguration, of Salvador Allende's *Unidad Popular* government. These actions, however, were neither as brutal nor as anti-democratic as they have often been portrayed. New documents reveal that the CIA and State Department directed their anti-Allende efforts at the preservation of Chile's democratic structures and of an unfettered opposition. Likewise, the CIA did not plan the murder of the Chilean Army's Commander-in-Chief, and had no detailed foreknowledge of the coup that overthrew Salvador Allende. Ultimately, the U.S. Government viewed the possibility of a dictatorship in Chile, be it Communist or Fascist, with disfavour. The central question examined in this thesis is whether U.S. covert activity was aimed at a 'rollback' of Communism in Chile and Latin America, or merely containment of the Allende government.

Containment or Rollback?
The CIA in Chile 1970-1973

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Glossary and Dramatis Personae

Glossary:

Carabinero: Chile's uniformed national police. Not part of the armed forces, they were nonetheless considered to be part of Chile's 'security services.'

COS: Chief of Station. This is the senior CIA officer in a CIA country-team. The COS reported to both the Ambassador and to CIA HQ.

CT: Country-team. The country-team is the CIA officers posted permanently to an embassy under some type of diplomatic cover. Compare: False-flag officers.

CWH/D: Chief of Western Hemisphere Division of the CIA.

DDP: Deputy Director Plans of the CIA. This is a misleading name, as the DDP is actually the individual charged with the execution of covert operations.

El Mercurio: Oldest Spanish-language newspaper in the world and main rightist newspaper in Chile. *El Mercurio* was the main media critic of the Allende government.

False Flagger/Flag Officer: A CIA agent who operates under a false third-country passport for extra security. Unlike other CIA operatives, who operate from the cover of an embassy position, 'false-flaggers' are brought in for special tasks generally of high security and short duration.

FMS: Foreign Military Sales. A programme by which surplus U.S. military equipment is 'cascaded' to allied or friendly nations at a reduced cost.

GOC: U.S. abbreviation for 'Government of Chile'.

Jefe del Plaza: Chief of the Plaza. Essentially the general in charge of internal security.

MAP: Military Assistance Program. The U.S. Government programme by which military equipment and training was provided to Armies in Latin America *gratis*.

MIR: *El Movimiento de Izquierida Revolucionar* or Revolutionary Movement of the Left: an extreme left-wing political party and organization employed (unofficially) by the UP to enforce politically impossible measures, such as the occupation of privately owned firms, attacks on opposition press and political parties, and attacks on anti-government protests. They were the chief opponents of *Patria y Libertad* in the frequent running street-battles of late 1972 and 1973.

Patria y Libertad: Homeland and Liberty, an extreme right-wing organization that used violence and street gangs to oppose the UP government. Their youth organization was the chief opponents of MIR in the frequent running street-battles of late 1972 and 1973.

PDC: *Partido Cristiano Democrata* or Christian Democratic Party of Chile- a left-centre party and the main non-Communist party in Chile. The PDC are the main opposition to the Allende government.

PIR: *Partido Izquierida Radical* or Radical Party of the Left. A non-Marxist member of the ruling UP coalition. They left the coalition in 1972, causing a significant ripple in the confidence of the government but not affecting their strength in the Congress.

PN: National Party. A right-wing party in the minority of the opposition.

SRG/ Senior Review Group: A cabinet-level group of CIA, NSC and State Department officials charged with the review of security-related matters.

Unidad Popular: A united front of Marxist, Socialist and Communist parties, headed in 1970 by Salvador Allende, which comprised the left-wing segment of the Chilean political spectrum. They formed the Government of Chile only once, from 1970 to 1973.

USG: Shorthand for U.S. Government.

Dramatis Personae:

United States:

William V. Broe: CIA Chief of Western Hemisphere Division (CWH/D) to mid -1973

William Colby: CIA special operations veteran. Colby pioneered the CIA 'election operations' in Italy in the 1950's. He was No. 3 in the CIA in 1970, and was Director CIA in at the time of the coup in 1973. With co-author Peter Forbath, he has written a book on his career in the CIA, *Honorable Men*.

Nathanial Davis: U.S. Ambassador to Chile. October 13, 1971 to 1973.

U. Alexis Johnson: Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Often called "Ambassador Johnson."

Thomas Karamessines: CIA Deputy Director Plans (DDP). Karamessines was made the head of the Chile Task Force, which executed "Track II" under the direct orders of the White House.

Henry Kissinger: Assistant to the President on National Security Affairs to President Richard Nixon, de facto chairman of the NSC. Made Secretary of State in 1973.

Edward Korry: US Ambassador to Chile, 1967-1971.

Jack Kubisch: Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs.

Richard Helms: Director CIA under Nixon. He was DCIA during Track I and Track II, replaced by William Colby.

Charles Meyer: Assistant Secretary of State. Meyer represented the U.S. Government at Allende's inauguration on November 3, 1970.

David Atlee Phillips: A veteran of operations in Chile from the 1950's. Phillips became CWH/D in June of 1973. He has written a book on his CIA career titled *The Night Watch.*

William Rogers: Secretary of State under Nixon. President Ford replaced him with Henry Kissinger.

Viron P. Vaky: NSC Staff Expert in Latin American Affairs, and advisor to Kissinger.

Chile:

Salvador Allende Gossens: Heap of the *Unidad Popular* coalition that won the 1970 presidential election. He is verthrown in a coup on September 11, 1970.

Jorge Allesandri Rondriguez: President of Chile from 1958 to 1964, as member of the National Party. As an independent, Allesandri was the main candidate against Allende in the 1970 election.

Brigadier General Alfredo Cannales Marquez: Director of the War Academy after Allende's election. A coup-plotter.

Eduardo Frei Montalva: President of Chile from 1964 to 1970 and a leading figure in the PDC.

General Carlos Prats: Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army and Minister of Defence in Allende's first military cabinet. Under pressure from his chief staff officers, he resigns both positions on August 23, 1973. He was later assassinated in Argentina by the Chilean secret service.

General René Schneider y Mahn: Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army ("*Jefe del Ejercito*") at the time of Allende's election. He is killed in a botched kidnap attempt on October 22, 1970.

Radomiro Tomic Romero: PDC candidate for the presidential elections of 1970.

General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte: Senior staff officer in the Chilean army. *Jeffe del Plaza*, or internal security chief, through the time of the strikes and civil unrest. He replaced Prats as army C-in-C after the former's resignation on 23 August 1973, and held that position at the time of the coup. Subsequent to the coup, Pinochet became the President of the ruling *Junta* and effectively the dictator of Chile.

General Camillo Valenzuela: Commander of the Santiago district at the time of Allende's election and inauguration. A coup plotter, he assumes the position of *Jefe del Plaza* after the inauguration, but resigns and flees after his role in plotting surfaces

General Roberto Viaux Marambio: Chilean army officer retired after leading abortive *Tacnazo* insurrection in 1969. Plots and kills General Rene Schneider on October 22, 1970, and is subsequently arrested and exiled.

Introduction

A Great American Myth

> Not only are the men of democracies not naturally desirous
> of revolutions, but they are afraid of them.
> --Alexis de Tocqueville
> *Democracy in America*

From 1970 to 1973 the United States government was involved in covert and open actions against the elected Marxist government of Chile led by Salvador Allende. When the history of these actions was initially recorded in the 1970's and early 1980's, the impression of American behaviour was universally negative, telling a story of a U.S. government that abused its power and betrayed its own principles. A generation has passed since this accepted history was established, and it is perhaps time that it was re-examined. New documents are available, and the events being examined are not as immediate or politicised as they once were. The historian approaches history as conscious or unconscious spokesman of ones society, as E.H. Carr said,[1] and the thirty years distance allows a second look at what was, from the start, a controversial and emotionally evocative series of events.

In the continuum of American foreign policy, Chile takes a primary place on the litany of actions that are meant to confirm America's reputation as a modern agent of imperialism. The U.S., it is argued, will ruthlessly and thoughtlessly crush any communist or socialist government it possibly can, no matter how benign the state. The construction of the reputation as it pertains to Chile is formidable and the means to disprove it must flow against a strong tide of popular misconception. This paper serves not to exonerate the United States as a power, nor to rehabilitate their reputation, but to establish the facts on this one particularly ill-suited example of America's supposed criminal behaviour. Using the most recent documentary evidence available, this paper will deconstruct the common but uninformed beliefs about American covert intervention in Chile during (and immediately before) the Presidency of Salvador Allende. This may also serve as a case study of covert means of influence in foreign states, for while the Americans did not topple the Allende government, they most certainly did conduct covert operations in Chile, and the failures and successes of those efforts are worthy of evaluation. Neither completely innocent nor thoroughly despicable, the record of actual American covert action in Chile sheds light on how the U.S. deals with threats to its security and influence in the Americas. Taken as a whole, this study will show that American power, when employed in foreign states, is not always as evil or omnipotent as many allege. There are limits to American power and influence, and the case of American actions in Chile shows this most clearly.

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It was clear from the moment of his election that the Government of Salvador Allende was a momentous event. "The election of a Marxist president, a nationalization policy aimed at US investments, and a flirting with Castro's Cuba, all serve to make

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[1] E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (New York, 1961), p. 42.

Chile the most talked of and controversial country in Latin America today,"[2] said one American government officer. Dozens of books and articles by such prominent names as Alistair Horne and French communist Regis Debray discussed, lauded or criticised this enigmatic leader within weeks of his election.[3] There in quiet distant Chile was an example of how nations could develop and prosper without the 'American Way,' without big-market capitalism. Allende's ouster and death in 1973 shocked many of his American and European sympathisers deeply. Surely his downfall was caused by the United States, a nation that made little secret of its dislike for Allende's programme of nationalisation and socialist solidarity! As former American Ambassador to Chile, Nathaniel Davis, said in his memoirs, "[Many people believed that] Allende *had* to succeed. Many were not ready to accept his failure, and they were particularly reluctant to accept the idea that Allende's tragedy has indigenous Chilean roots, even in part."[4]

Walter LeFeber's article "The Tension between Democracy and Capitalism" is a popular depiction of American actions in Chile. Mentioned only in one sentence of one paragraph, Chile is used as the totem of all that is wrong with American foreign policy in Latin America. LeFeber simply states that the U.S. "ruthlessly undermined the elected Chilean government of Salvador Allende…Allende died as he was overthrown by the military."[5] This argument is typical and revealing not because of what it says—which is not a lot—but because of what it insinuates. The first insinuation is based on the assumption that since the Chilean government was elected, it was therefore behaving in a democratic fashion. Working from this assumption, it presumes that all American activities were anti-democratic and in support of the fascist Pinochet *junta* that took over Chile after the coup. Finally, it allows the assumption that the U.S. was solely responsible for the fall of the Allende government. None of these assumptions can be completely backed by the evidence. Of course, this is not to say that the well-respected Walter LeFeber was lying or fabricating history, but it does demonstrate the power of the 'story' that has grown to surround Chile's Marxist experiment. 'Chile'—a descriptive noun within the American foreign policy lexicon—has come to represent the worst of American political culture. In this association, the role of Chile and Chileans is reduced solely to that of Trojan Hector to the flashing sword of an American Achilles.

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[2] Dante B Fascell, 1971 testimony, quoted in *The United States and Chile During the Allende Years 1970-1973.* Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. House of Representatives, 94th Congress, 1st Session. Washington, 1975.

[3] Alistair Horne. *Small Earthquake in Chile: A Visit to Allende's South America* (London, 1972.) and Regis Debray, *The Chilean Revolution: Conversations with Allende* (New York: 1971).

[4] Nathaniel Davis, *The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende* (Ithaca, 1988), p. X. *Original Italics.*

[5] Michael J. Hogan, ed., *The Ambiguous Legacy* (Cambridge, 1999), p.173.

Perhaps this is a faulted view. A more extensive examination of events in Chile from 1970 to 1973 reveals a deeper and more lively texture to Chile's political history and culture. The peaceful socialist that attempted to transform Chile's social landscape and thwart the aggressive advances of the United States is not the same man who killed himself—with a gun gifted to him by Castro—as rebellious army troops, under the cover of air force jets, stormed almost unopposed into *La Moneda*, Chile's presidential palace. From the many sources available in both English and Spanish, one might develop a picture not of a devoted democrat of Marxist inclination, but rather a devoted Marxist working tirelessly—if without sound political tactics—to convert Chile into a single-party Marxist People's Republic.[6] In his three years in office Allende alienated and stratified his population to the point that the staunchly republican Chilean army took up arms against the President. This is not to say that the government that followed Allende, that of the dictator Augusto Pinochet, was justifiable or a morally acceptable alternative.

Rather, in the words of the scholar Mark Falcoff, "there is no reason to assume that the virtues of a vanished regime increase in direct proportion to the iniquities of its successor."[7]

It is interesting that in the existing literature from Chile itself, the focus of study is not on the intervention of the U.S. nor on the tactics of the CIA, but on the constitutional and political/tactical failures that caused Allende's government to collapse so completely. Chilean scholar Luis Vitale, in his collaborative volume *Para Recuperar La Memoria Histórica* limits his discussion of American involvement in Chile to the citing of published sources regarding the Schneider assassination on October 1970.[8] Otherwise, he remains silent on the topic of American or CIA intervention. Jorge Mario Eastman, scion of the owners of the powerful right-wing *El Mercurio* newspaper, barely mentions American involvement in his book *De Allende y Pinochet al 'Milagro' chileno*, and when he does it is only to describe the inevitable American stance against a Marxist government in Chile.[9] This silence is not limited to right-wing sources. Socialist writer Joan E. Garcés concentrates her study *El Estado Y los Problemas Tacticos En El Gobierno De Allende* on, as the title suggests, the tactical problems of Allende's coalition government. Garcés focuses on the difficulty of implementing a socialist government in a capitalist state and "*La necesidad de suprerar el Estado burgués.*"[10] American intervention and pressure is not the paramount concern. Likewise, Chilean and Latin American historians have examined the nature of the Chilean armed forces to determine what turned that organization from a 'non-deliberative body' into Chile's most important

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[6] Salvador Allende Gossens, *Chile's Road to Socialism* (Baltimore, 1973), p. 50.
[7] Mark Falcoff, "Reviews" in *Orbis*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1977, p. 386.
[8] Luis Vitale, et al, *Para Recuperar La Memoria Histórica* (Santiago, 1999), pp. 184-190.
[9] Jorge Mario Eastman, *De Allende y Pinochet al 'Milagro' chileno* (Bogotá, 1997), pp. 56-57.

political actor in the period of the presidencies of Eduardo Frei and Salvador Allende (1964-1973).[11] Overall, these books stress the forceful and ultimately deciding role the Chilean Armed Forces played in the coup.

If modern Chilean and Latin American scholarship has been able to ignore the allegations of American complicity in the 1973 coup, where do the American sources stand? There are numerous sources that treat the fall of the Allende government as an interesting study in politics or diplomacy without needing to reflexively blame the American government for the coup. As an example, Peter A. Goldberg's article "The Politics of the Allende Overthrow in Chile" concentrates on the tensions and divisions within the Allende cabinet which led to unstable and contradictory government.[12] Richard Fagen, writing in *Foreign Affairs* in 1975 discusses the Chilean operations of the CIA in the context of American Cold-War strategy and the concepts of Soviet threat to Latin America. While critical of American actions, the lack of hard details on CIA operations redirect Fagen's attack to the White House's mistaken belief in the strategic importance of Chile.[13] More recently, American economists such as Ann Helwege focus on how "the withdrawal of US economic support forced [the Chilean Government] to make hard choices about how it would sustain a base of popular support."[14] Sadly, most sources cling to the 'common knowledge' that the CIA violently carried out a White House plan to rid Chile of its Marxist leadership. Comments similar to those of Walter

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[10] Joan E. Garcés, *El Estado Y los Problemas Tacticos En El Gobierno De Allende* (Madrid, 1974), p. 127. Translated as "The necessity of surpassing the bourgeois state."

[11] Andrea Ruiz-Esquide Figueroa, *Las Fuerzas Armadas Durante Los Gobiernos de Eduardo Frei Y Salvador Allende* (Santiago, 1993), '*presentacion*' p. I.

[12] Peter A. Goldberg, "The Politics of the Allende Overthrow in Chile" in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 90, No. 1, 1975.

[13] Richard Fagen, "The United States and Chile: Roots and Branches" in *Foreign Affairs*, January 1975.

[14] Ann Helwege, "Three Socialist Experiences in Latin America: Surviving U.S. Economic Pressure", in *The Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol 8, No. 2, 1989.

LeFeber, quoted above, are common. Like LeFeber, Henry R. Nau states in the volume *American Democracy Promotion*[15] that U.S. efforts in Chile were directly aimed at subverting or destabilizing an unfriendly democracy in favour of a pliable dictatorship.

Seymour Hersh's book *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* is one of the cornerstones within the common belief that the CIA attempted to assassinate Allende and was subsequently successful in overthrowing him. In the first page of his section on Chile, Hersh alleges, based on the evidence of a single clerk who handled some of the White House traffic on the matter, that "murder was one of the ways" that the CIA was directed to use to get rid of Salvador Allende.[16] Likewise, in a subsequent chapter Hersh continues to imply that the U.S. planned to assassinate Allende by stating: "No document will ever be found, nor will there be an eye witness, to describe CIA plans…to murder Salvador Allende…[but] that the plans and pressures existed is confirmed by a senior member of the intelligence community" whose information, Hersh assures the reader, has been "unfailingly accurate."[17] Filled with such shocking information, Hersh's book has become one of the major sources for people seeking details on American misbehaviour in Chile.[18] This becomes troublesome because Hersh does not quote his sources, relies on dozens of 'unnamed but reliable' sources and in many cases his conclusions are not based on fact but on extrapolation. By being quoted as widely as it has been, Hersh's book has become a machine to sustain misperceptions of American action in Chile. Almost all subsequent writers discuss Hersh's allegations at length, either as a main supporting source or, in the case of the memoirs of men like

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[15] Cox, Ikenberry and Inoguchi, eds., *American Democracy Promotion* (Oxford, 2000), p. 142.
[16] Seymour Hersh, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (New York, 1983), p. 259.
[17] Ibid., p. 292.

Ambassador Nathaniel Davis, in order to refute his allegations.[19] The former group, who quote him as a source, serve only to perpetuate a story-line based on incomplete or unreliable information.

The most successful refutation of the prevailing wisdom on American actions in Chile, to date, is that of Mark Falcoff, in *Modern Chile 1970-1989: A Critical History.* Falcoff outlines how the 'myth of Allende' has been cultivated and maintained over the years based solely on a few scraps of leaked information, dubious 'unnamed sources' and a few interviews. In cutting detail, Falcoff examines the works of Hersh, fellow reporter Jack Anderson, and other writers and shows irrefutably that there was no substantive evidence in their work to prove the allegations made. As Ambassador Davis has said, "Hersh presents no evidence" to support his allegations.[20] For various reasons—perhaps the 'need to believe in Allende' that Ambassador Davis mentioned—many officials and intellectuals who had no connection to American activities in Chile seized on the reports of Seymour Hersh and Jack Anderson as proof of American wrongdoing. "The need to compare charges with documentation is all the more pressing" Falcoff wrote, "because high officials of the U.S. Government and distinguished members of the American intellectual community have accepted in varying degrees the responsibility for Allende's failure."[21]

But documentary evidence—or lack of it—is precisely the problem. Any scholar writing on American involvement in Chile, until roughly 1999—as will be explained later—had only newspaper reports and the occasional leaked document to deal with.

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[18] Hersh is quoted in, *inter-alia*, William Blum's *Killing Hope* (New York, 1995), and William Robinson's *Promoting* Polyarchy (Cambridge, 1996).
[19] Nathaniel Davis, The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende (Ithaca, 1985), pp. 9-11.
[20] Ibid., p. 10.

American government documents remained sealed in their archives, holding closely the details of the American involvement for better or worse. There were only two government documents available for use in any study of Chile. This paucity of information has rather nicely facilitated attacks upon the US government's role in the whole affair, for while the opponents of American government actions have been able to sling any amount of mud based on hearsay or misinformed newspaper reports, the government has remained officially quiet. This same lack of corroborating evidence prevents more centrist authors, like Falcoff, from defending the US government in their stead. At best, writers like Falcoff have been able to show the logical failings of Hersh and Anderson, but they have been unable to offer a substantive alternative explanation. The room to create a myth appears because while it is easy to assert that something did happen with a very little evidence, it is impossible to prove that something *did not* happen with none.

The first of the two pre-1999 government documents is the Senate Report titled "Alleged Assassination Plots."[22] Dealing with several alleged American plots to assassinate foreign leaders around the world, this report deals only with a very restricted period of CIA activity in Chile, and in doing so comes to a terse conclusion that there was no evidence to prove any illegal activity. The report quotes widely from the CIA archives, and submits a credible narrative of the CIA and White House actions that were associated with the death of General René Schneider, Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army. Perhaps because the report exonerates the CIA or White House officials

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[21] Falcoff, *Modern Chile*, p. 201.

[22] U.S. Congress, Senate, *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, Interim Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, November 1975.

of any wrongdoing, it has been largely ignored as a source by those who chose to disbelieve its conclusions. Moreover, as it concentrates on a specific incident, the report has not proven useful to those writing on American intervention in general.

The second document, of wider scope and greater impact, was "Covert Action in Chile". Hitherto, this report has been the primary source for all those writing on Chile and the fall of the Allende Government. This document was issued in April 1976 as part of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities and its larger report "Foreign Military Intelligence, Book 1." Prompted by a *New York Times* story in December of 1974 which detailed allegedly illegal activities undertaken by the CIA,[23] the Senate committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Senator Frank Church, D-Idaho, to examine the allegations. Publishing its report in only fifteen months, "Covert Action", or 'The Church Committee Report', has been the main source of information on Chile until very recently.

Overall, "Covert Action" is a very usable report, and its appeal as the 'official word' on the topic is strong. It is a government report and with *Alleged Assassination Plots* the only one of its type to have access to the CIA, NSC, and State Department cables and memoranda of the period. Likewise, it presents many of the facts without emotion or apparent bias, detailing the amounts of money spent by the CIA and a credible chronology of American activities. It would be a mistake, however, to believe that the report was written in a non-partisan atmosphere or that it represents, without political bias, the views of the whole legislative branch of the U.S. government. Senator Barry Goldwater, a Republican member of the committee, has publicly attacked the report for its partisan stance and free flowing use of insinuation. As it was a 'staff report' and not a report of the committee, members of the committee were not permitted to submit opposing views.[24] Both Mark Falcoff and Ambassador Davis support this view that the Church Committee report, while containing useful information, "manages to convey at the same time the unmistakable impression" that all CIA activities were linked to coup plotting.[25] By having a strong element of officialness, "Covert Action" is able to write-in a partisan opinion guarded by sole access to the documents concerned.[26]

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[23] Pat M. Holt, *Secret Intelligence and Public Policy* (Washington, 1995), p. 221

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New Documents and a New View

The release of the Chile Collection has dramatically changed the resources available to scholars writing on Chile, freeing them of the constraints and biases of the Church Committee report or the handful of investigative reporters. While Augusto Pinochet was the subject of legal wrangling and extradition orders throughout 1998, American President William J. Clinton ordered the release of all government documents that dealt with American intervention in Chile from 1950's to the present. This was achieved with a massive declassification of documents from the State Department, CIA, DOD, Department of Justice and the National Archives achieved between October 1999 and November 2000.[27] Under the general guidance of the NSC, thousands of documents within the date range of 1968 to 1991 were declassified and compiled on a State

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[24] Goldwater, p. 85-86.

[25] Falcoff, *Modern Chile*, p. 236. See also Davis, p. 319.

[26] Goldwater, p. 95.

[27] State Department Press Releases, 8 October 1999, 30 June 1999, 13 November 2000.

Department web-site, www.foia.state.gov. One cannot underestimate the importance of this archive. First of all, it is published electronically in an unrestricted site, allowing a degree of access rarely found in government documents. Furthermore, the Chile collection is equipped with a search engine which can be set to seek time frames, specific words or phrases in the text and title, or can easily be browsed. This feature makes it tremendously easy for the researcher to follow a thread of, for instance, cables between the CIA HQ and the CIA station in Santiago as they develop or fine tune an operations plan. Most importantly, the archive is massive. The State Department site contains precisely 34,050 documents pertaining to Chile, 1,269 of which fall into the arbitrary date range of January 1, 1970 to December 31, 1973. The CIA branch of the archive contains 2,182 documents, with 993 falling within the same date range as above. Including the NSC, DOD and other branches of the archive, there are over 3,500 documents, totaling more than 10,000 pages, chronologically ordered and easily accessed from any part of the world.

There are some shortfalls to the archive. Many of the documents have been heavily censored. This, however, is an inescapable fact with documents pertaining to intelligence matters. As in Chile, with events not even one generation past, it would be disastrous to many in the U.S. and Chile for the U.S. Government to release the names of collaborators, informants or agents who may still be alive and who most certainly have family members or associates still in Chile. Moreover, it would destroy the apparent trustworthiness of American security establishments and irreparably damage their ability to ever recruit sympathizers again. While such matters only account for a few lines of deletion, the remaining most likely relate to matters of 'trade-craft' or operational method. This is borne out in the examination of many documents which, in one example, show in one paragraph the decision to pass money to a political party, have the next paragraph deleted, and have the third paragraph discuss the usage of these funds by the receiving party.[28] While one might suggest that the deleted paragraph may have dealt with an assassination plot or devious presidential order—who could absolutely refute such a claim?—it is much more reasonable to suggest that the deleted paragraph represents the method by which the CIA passed the money to the party. Other larger deletions are more difficult to explain, and in some entire pages are removed.[29] It is, of course, possible to assume that the deletions account for every unexplained or mysterious American activity, but to make such an assumption is as difficult to prove (and disprove!) as it is easy to assert. For the purposes of this study security deletions were treated neutrally, for to speculate on that which effectively does not exist can rarely be fruitful.

One of the first writers to make use of at least parts of this new archive was Christopher Hitchens, writing in *Harper's Magazine* in March and April of 2001. A writer of tremendous style and power, Hitchens writes with the express aim of having former National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger tried for crimes against humanity.[30] Over the course of two impassioned articles, he argues that the CIA, under Kissinger's direct orders, assassinated a key Chilean general and then plotted directly for the overthrow of Salvador Allende. The weakness with these two articles is not the items from the archive quoted by Hitchens, but those that have been left out. Perhaps due to the short nature of the articles, and the fact that he was writing them with the objective of condemning Kissinger, Hitchens quotes at length from a very small number of documents, and only those that serve to implicate Kissinger directly. Left out are the vast expanse of documents, many of them seemingly unconnected, that deal with the apparently boring but tremendously important day-to-day mechanics of this covert operation. Furthermore, Hitchens falls prey to the same logical error committed by Hersh; he establishes a few solid facts and then extrapolates them into a more serious conclusion for which he has no proof. In "The Case Against Henry Kissinger", Hitchens moves from the established fact that the CIA worked with those who assassinated the unfortunate General Schneider, buttresses this fact with the knowledge that the U.S. wanted Allende out of office, and then jumps to the 'certain' conclusion that the U.S. was directly responsible for the coup that killed Allende.[31] In the mean time, it is left to the imagination that all CIA actions in Chile were violent and designed solely to kill Salvador Allende and his 'democratically elected' government. This not only simplifies the political programme and methods of Allende's Marxist party, but it also vastly misjudges the complex and often subtle operations of the CIA. Perhaps Kissinger is guilty of crimes against humanity but, as the 'Chile Collection' archives suggest, Chile is perhaps not the best example for Hitchens to employ. If one is to understand the nature of the American programme in Chile, and if one seeks a better understanding of the capabilities of the CIA, one must look deeper into the archives, beyond the politically motivated charges of writers such as Christopher Hitchens.

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[28] Memorandum, Jack Kubisch to Ambassador Porter, "Chile – Initial Post Coup Support", 11 October 1973. See also Memorandum, Rob Roy Ratliff to Kissinger, "Covert Political Action in Chile", 10 August 1973.
[29] E.G. Cable, unknown to unknown, "Following…Uprising", 7 July 1973.

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[30] Christopher Hitchens, "The Case Against Henry Kissinger, Part 1, The Making of a War Criminal" in *Harper's Magazine*, February 2001, p. 33.

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Containment or Rollback?

In the greater scheme of things, the question posed by this thesis is: in its actions in Chile was the U.S. seeking a 'rollback' of communism in Latin America, or was it seeking merely to contain a Marxist government within the constitutional structure? To answer this question, this paper will seek to explore the activities of the CIA, as well as the State Department, in the formation and execution of American policy in Chile between 1970 and 1973. It will be shown that the CIA did not desire the assassination of any Chilean, nor did it plot the coup that led to Allende's demise. Furthermore, it is possible to show the clear moral sense displayed by many CIA agents in Chile and the awareness they had of what their actions might achieve. It is apparent that the CIA believed its mission was to *support* open democracy, not to thwart it, and they were clear in their desire to avoid a military dictatorship, however pro-American, as the replacement for Allende. But the factor that really bears further examination is that there are limits to American power as displayed in the CIA's Chilean operations. The United States was unable to engineer a constitutional movement against Allende, despite the fact that the majority of Chileans had voted against this government. The CIA was unable to organize a military move against the government of Chile, nor was it able to control those Chileans who were so motivated. The CIA, despite tremendous pressure to succeed in its appointed tasks, was ultimately hamstrung by its inability and unwillingness to force Chilean politicians and soldiers to act as they wanted them too.

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[31] Hitchens, Part 2, March 2001, p. 49.

Almost thirty years have now passed since Salvador Allende was killed in the coup that established a military junta in Chile. The Pinochet government is now gone and democracy restored to Chile. With new documents, and cooler emotions, it is now a suitable time to seek a fresh perspective on American covert activities against the Allende government. Through examination of these new archives, it is clear that American intentions and CIA actions in Chile were not as single-minded, nor as ruthlessly successful, and the public often imagines. The CIA operations in Chile demonstrate the nature of American influence and the capabilities and limits of covert action.

Chapter 2

A Most Delicate and Difficult Position

Allende, The Presidential Election, and 'Track I'
Events to September 16, 1970

> The history of US policy towards Latin America as a whole seems to be one constant swing of the pendulum between excesses: between studied indifference, ignorance and downright neglect and a kind of slushy romanticism...between paternalistic imperialism and reformist altruism...
>
> --Alistair Horne
> *Small Earthquake in Chile*

Through the length of his political career, Allende aroused the attention of the Unites States' Government, which sought to prevent the election of a man that they could not fail to perceive as a threat to American hegemony in Latin America. Allende used radical language and pursued radical policies, and he did not hide his anti-American and anti-Capitalist agenda. There is much room for debate on the topic of the real threat to American hemispheric interests posed by Allende, but this debate will come at least 30 years too late: the American government in the 1960's and 1970's believed that he was a direct threat to U.S. interests and acted to prevent his election and the subsequent Marxist government he wished to install.

Despite the near-universal dislike of Allende in American government circles, there was still significant friction between the government agencies involved as to what could and should be done to prevent his winning the Chilean presidency. The National Security Council and the State Department disagreed, and there was disagreement between the State Department and the Ambassador (nominally a state Department functionary). Further enmity between the NSC and the Ambassador (also, technically, directly responsible to the President as well as being responsible for the actions of CIA operatives in his embassy) did not improve matters.[1] All this disagreement led to mixed, committee-drafted orders implemented too late to have the desired effect. It is always questionable to speak of the "American Government" in terms of being a single-minded, monolithic entity. American actions towards Chile make this clear, as in this case American policy was frequently contradictory, often late, and definitely ineffective.

Within the greater context of American intervention in Chile, 'Track I' programmes are the least examined. They are too often viewed as the dismissible preface to the assassinations and coups that were planned and plotted in subsequent months. This is an unfortunate oversight; for when one examines Track I activities it becomes clear that Track I sets the tone and trend of future American operations in Chile. The first of these trends is the inability of the U.S., either the embassy staff or the CIA, to influence Chilean politics and politicians as much as they wished. More specifically, Track I demonstrated the limits of the CIA's ability to gather intelligence, and influence domestic politics, unless given sufficient time, proper direction, and freedom to develop contacts. Ultimately, it also demonstrated that there were deep divisions between the U.S. government agencies concerned in the Chilean operations. Each of these organizations—State Department, NSC, CIA Headquarters and operations teams, and embassy staff—maintained their own strong views and moral stances as to what was acceptable and effective in their anti-Allende operations. Within the context of Track I, these limitations demonstrate the extent to which the Americans can influence events even in nations within their own sphere of influence. These boundaries of influence served to prevent the United States from thwarting the election of Salvador Allende.

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[1] Memorandum, "Policy Decisions Related to our Covert Action Involvement in the September 1970 Chilean Presidential Election," 15 September 1970.

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The Chilean Political Field

Chile has a long and proud democratic history. This history began with a revolution against Spanish control that established a fledgling democracy in 1818. After a revision in 1925, the Chilean constitution remained unchanged until after the 1973 coup.[2] Overall, Chile's history is one remarkably free of the *golpe de estado* (coup d'etat) that fit within the North American stereotype of Latin America.[3] As American Ambassador Edward M. Korry described it, Chile was:

> The most stable, tested, freest democracy in South America... Democracy in Chile meant exactly what it meant in the United States. Even more: it meant an unfettered press. It meant a multi-partied Congress. It meant an independent judiciary. It meant an apolitical army, an army that had never participated in politics.[4]

While Chile had grown wealthy through the two world wars by sales of copper and foodstuffs to the belligerents, its population had stratified. There was a notably sophisticated upper and middle-class, upwardly mobile and educated, comprising about one third of the population, with the remaining population existing in several distinct layers of 'working class' and urban poor.[5] This social stratification contributed to a Communist party which was one of the strongest in the west.[6] The Socialist party could claim a thirty-seven year history with impressive results when both in and out of government, as the Chilean social-welfare system—and concomitant debt—indicate. Consciously copying the European model, Chile's socialists began, in the 30's, to form into 'Popular Fronts', the first of which, the "*Frente Popular,*" brought President Pedro Aguirre Cerdo to power in 1938. This party, a mix of communists and socialists, was one of the most loyal to Moscow in the entire world.[7] Indeed, the decision to form this front was taken at the 7th Congress of the International Communist Movement, held in Moscow in 1935.[8]

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[2] The President was elected for a term of six years and was not able to succeed himself. Deputies were elected for four-year terms and senators for terms of eight years. J. Biehl Del Rio and Gonzalo Fernandez R., "The Political Pre-requisites for a Chilean Way," in *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 7, No.3, 1972, p. 308.

[3] Harold Eugene Davis, "The Presidency in Chile," In *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. X, No. X, 19XX, p. 707.

[4] F. Orrego Vicuna, ed., *Chile; The Balanced View* (Santiago, 1975), p. 292.

This movement of leftist parties ran in opposition to Chile's long established political culture. On the right was the National Party and in the centre was the Radical Party, a collection of various socialists held together by a shared anti-clericalism, and divided on the subject of cooperating with the Marxist left.[9] Also in the centre, though more left-leaning, were the relatively new Christian Democratic Party (PDC), whose membership tended to support land reform, state influence in the economy, and the cause of "Christian communitarianism."[10] All of these parties were historically very important in Chilean politics but saw some measure of their support drawn away to the Communist/Marxist 'popular fronts' that emerged after 1938.

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[5] Sigmund, 21. Cf. Mark Falcoff, *Modern Chile 1970-1989: A Critical History* (Pittsburgh, 1989), p. 18. Falcoff argues that the Chilean socio-economic set-up was almost a perfect mimic of the European and North American societies.

[6] Ambassador Nathaniel Davis, *The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende* (Ithaca, 1989), p. 3.

[7] James D. Theberge, *The Soviet Presence in Latin America* (New York, 1974), p. 51. See also testimony of Ambassador Korry, "The United States and Chile During the Allende Years", Hearings Before the House Sub-Committee of Foreign Affairs, July 1 1971, p. 11.

[8] Eusebio Mujal-León, *TheUSSR and Latin America: A Developing Relationship* (Boston, 1989), p. 124-125. See also J. Biehl del Rio and Gonzalo Fernandez R., "The Political Pre-requisites for a Chilean Way," in *Government and Opposition*, Vol 7, No. 3, 1972, p. 316.

[9] Julio Faúndez, *Marxism and Democracy in Chile* (New Haven, CT, 1988), pp. 31, 160-161.

Salvador Allende Gossens was a recurring character in Chile's political dramas from the 1930's onwards.[11] From a wealthy family, Allende had entered politics while still in medical school and had helped found the Chilean Socialist party in 1933, the year he graduated.[12] Elected as a federal deputy in 1937, Allende became Secretary-General of the Socialist Party in 1943. Revolutionary Cuba stood as his party's main model and Allende cultivated a close friendship with Castro. Allende was important in the forming of the Cuban-sponsored Latin American Solidarity Organization (LASO), which was to serve as the political body behind Che Guevera's 1967 Bolivian adventure.[13] Indeed, Allende's daughter Beatriz married the Cuban diplomat Luiz Fernandez Ona, a former *Guevaraista* and intimate of Castro.[14] In the merger of the Socialists and Communists each entity remained intact, but there was enough cohesion in the party to retain Allende as the presidential candidate over the course of four consecutive elections.

1958 was the second election in which Allende ran (in 1952 he was the candidate for a fringe Socialist party, where he received 5.5% of the vote). Then, as head of the *Popular Action Front* (FRAP) he was one of four candidates; his principal opponents being Jorge Alessandri, of the conservative *Democratic Front*, and Eduardo Frei of the

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[10] Sigmund, p. 17.

[11] In Spanish speaking countries, two last names are officially used. However the latter name, called the matronymic, is not used in addressing an individual.

[12] Barry Goldwater, "On Covert Actions in Chile 1963-1973: A response to the Church Committee Report" in *Inter-American Economic* Affairs, Vol. XXX, No. 1, 1986, p. 86.

[13] Ibid, p. 87.

[14] Nathaniel Davis, p. 91.

PDC.[15] Allende lost by only 3.3%, and the Chilean congress confirmed Alessandri as president in a run-off vote.[16] The conservative government proved unpopular, and in the 1964 presidential race, Allende's main opposition was the PDC of Eduardo Frei. The PDC under Frei confirmed Chile's drift to the left, as they ran a platform of increased social spending and of compensated nationalization ("Chileanisation") of the copper and mining industry (with which the Americans cooperated). With conservative votes swinging to the centre, Frei won the election with a substantial 57% of the vote.[17]

If the Americans were happy to support a small 's' socialist like Eduardo Frei, what threat did a character like Salvador Allende pose? Here was a gentleman who seemed to be a quiet, spectacled politician without any of Castro's revolutionary appearance. He wore fashionable suits, drove nice cars, and seemed to have the habits of a member of the political and social elite.[18] Certainly, the American establishment did not doubt Allende's revolutionary zeal, and the Nixon administration considered it axiomatic that an Allende government would be stringently Marxist and would threaten American interests.[19] Director of the CIA, Richard Helms wrote in a CIA directive that "Allende himself belongs to the Socialist Party. This is a Marxist, nationalist party with a strong faction committed to violent revolution, rather than the parliamentary road to power favoured by the Moscow-line Chilean Communist Party."[20]

Many might dismiss this talk from American officials to be run-of-the-mill anti-Communist rhetoric. Did the Americans have any evidence to make them believe that

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[15] Faúndez, p. 109.
[16] Falcoff, *Modern Chile*, p. 14.
[17] *Covert Action In Chile*, Para C-3.
[18] Nathaniel Davis, p. 50.
[19] Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston, 1979) p. 661.
[20] Memorandum, DCIA (Helms) to NSC, 6 Nov 1970.

Allende was a threat to U.S. security or assets? Or is it the case that, as one critic has suggested, "because Allende used radical rhetoric…he prematurely cast himself as a radical communist in Washington's eyes?"[21] There was, at the time, ample indication of what path Allende wished to follow, and it ran clearly against American interests. The programme of the *Unidad Popular* (UP, the successor to the FRAP), published in December of 1969, states the matter very clearly.

> Active defence of the independence of Chile means that the present Organization of American States must be denounced as the tool and agency of North American imperialism and that we must resist any form of Pan-Americanism contained in this organisation….[the] right to rebellion of people subject to such [imperialist] systems will be recognised…likewise solidarity will be expressed *in practical terms* for the Cuban revolution.[22]

This was not an isolated piece of rhetoric, and could not have been formed in language more certain to aggravate the United States. Furthermore, Allende made clear the fact that the UP advocated "the release of Chile from the domination of foreign capital. This implies expropriation of foreign capital and the implementation of a policy aimed at a greater degree of independent financing…."[23] As the U.S. had close to one billion dollars in assets in Chile, this was, without a doubt, a major motivation for American corporations and so also their representatives in government.

The Americans did not perceive the threat to be simply anti-American: they were convinced that his presidency would lead to an irreversible Marxist dictatorship and Allende's tone did little to remove this thought from their minds. In one of his speeches Allende argued "*Las cosas son buenas o malas segun nos aproximen o nos alejen del*

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[21] Gil Merom, "Democracy, Dependency, and Destabilization: The Shaking of Allende's Regime" in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol 105, No. 1, 1990, p. 93.
[22] Allende, *Chile's Road to Socialism*, p. 50. Italics added.
[23] Ibid, p. 41.

poder, segun aseguren o no la irreversibilidad del proceso revolucionario."[24] This pragmatic view of power echoed Allende's vision of an exclusively revolutionary government that excluded the traditional conservative parties. Allende wrote that "The *Unidad Popular* government will be pluralistic: it will be composed of all revolutionary parties, movements and currents."[25] It is doubtful that Allende would have viewed a conservative or pro-OAS political party to be 'revolutionary.'

Based on Allende's 37 years as a politician in Chile's democratic institutions, the author Paul Sigmund contends that "the fact he was a committed Marxist did not pose the same challenge to Chilean political democracy as might have been the case in other countries."[26] Likewise, Sigmund indicates Allende's 'bourgeois' tastes in clothes, women, and cars to show a fundamentally democratic fellow who was a Marxist more in the style of Francois Mitterand than in the style of Stalin or Pol Pot.[27] While the latter two examples are no doubt extreme, there is little doubt about Allende's revolutionary credentials. As the rather partisan (but frank) Kissinger pointed out, one should not "insult the integrity of a man who spent his life dedicated to revolution by claiming him to be something he always emphatically denied."[28] Allende stated the matter quite clearly: "the objective is total, scientific Marxist socialism."[29]

As reflected in both Chilean and American comments above, Allende framed his politics in the classic terms of anti-Americanism and Marxist revolution. His stance was even more in-line with Moscow's official communist doctrine than was Cuba's in 1960, and potentially even more worthy of support.[30] It is not surprising that the American government disliked the thought of a UP government. It is clear that no one saw Chile as 'vital ground' in terms of bases, flight paths, sea-lanes or overall physical defence.[31] In his memoirs, Kissinger states that a Marxist government in Chile would pose a direct threat to American *interests*, though not necessarily a threat to American *national security*. Kissinger wrote:

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[24] Chilean Government, *White Book of the Change in Government in Chile 11 September 1973* (Santiago: 1973), p. 32. Translated as "...things are good or bad as long as they bring us near or take us away from power, as they assure or not the non-reversibility of the revolutionary process."

[25] Allende, p. 33.

[26] Sigmund, p. 24.

[27] See Nathaniel Davis, p. 50, for a discussion of Allende's personal habits.

[28] Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 655.

> Allende's election was a challenge to our national interests. We did not find it easy to reconcile ourselves to a second Communist state in the Western Hemisphere. We were persuaded that it would soon be inciting anti-American policies, attacking hemispheric solidarity, and sooner or later making common cause with Cuba.[32]

Investigative reporter Seymour Hersh posits that Allende's threat was not to Chilean democracy but to American hegemony, for "Allende was a living example of democratic social reform in Latin America."[33] Ambassador Davis spun this concept out, but to opposite effect, arguing that Allende was anti-American and peaceful, *seemingly* un-revolutionary. That combination could prove a lightning rod against American interests in Latin America. A diplomatic expression of this might eventually lead to what Nixon called a "red sandwich," of Cuba and Chile, causing trouble in the hemisphere.[34] Though there is quite a geographic distance separating the two, this can be taken as an expression to describe an anti-U.S. axis across the Andes Mountains, which might eventually take in Bolivia and Peru in addition to Chile and Cuba.[35] Indeed, Allende stated in his 1970 campaign that "Cuba in the Caribbean and a Socialist Chile will make

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[29] Régis Debray, *The Chilean Revolution* (New York, 1971) p. 118.

[30] Nicola Miller, *Soviet Relations with Latin America* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 127.

[31] Lars Schoultz, *National Security and U.S. Policy towards Latin America* (Princeton, 1987), p. 184.

[32] Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 654.

[33] Seymour M. Hersh, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (New York, 1983), p. 270.

[34] Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York, 1978), p. 490.

[35] William P. Lineberry, *The United States In World Affairs 1970* (New York, 1972), p. 194.

revolution in Latin America."[36] Past all this Cold War posturing, a true threat to the United States came from Allende's more limited threat to the tangible expression of American Hemispheric supremacy, the Organisation of American States. Cuba, on an island close to the U.S., was essentially contained, isolated from the OAS, and thus unable to mount any serious challenge to the United States. If the United States could not 'keep house' in its own Hemisphere, how could it seek to impose its will in other arenas, such as the Middle East or East Asia? As theorist Robert W. Tucker wrote:

> In Central America there are no vital raw materials or minerals whose loss might provide the basis for legitimate security concerns. Yet Central America bears geographic proximity to the United States, and historically it has long been regarded as falling within our sphere of influence…[if] the Soviet Union observes our passivity to events in our own backyard that signal the loss of American control, what conclusions might it draw about our probable passivity in other, far more difficult areas?[37]

Whether there is any justification to this argument is not important, for it was the underlying belief of the key characters in American government. At the time, the Americans were dealing with significant diplomatic challenges from the Soviet Union in Egypt, Syria, and in Cuba with the Cienfuegos submarine base. For Chile to trump the U.S. might—it was thought—prove disastrous to American prestige at a critical moment. In its most essential form, the Americans perceived Allende as a threat to their credibility, the proverbial mouse to the American elephant.

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[36] Goldwater, p. 88.

[37] Robert W. Tucker, *The Purpose of American Power: An Essay on national Security* (New York, 1981), pp 176-177, p. 181.

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American Activities in Chile

Since the days of President Monroe, through the end of the Second World War, American hegemony in the Americas had met no significant challenge. Castro's revolution of 1958 changed this placid landscape significantly. Fuelled by resentment over Castro's victory and subsequent hard-line anti-American stance, U.S. diplomacy towards Latin America took on a new vigour in the 1960's, attempting through the "Alliance for Progress" to rapidly develop Latin American nations under the American model of liberal democratic capitalist nations. However, there emerged what some call a 'credibility gap'—a gap between American promises and the political-economic results of American intervention. The 'gap' was the result of the harsh conditions of "U.S. AID" loans (which required 90% of its value to be spent in the U.S., with goods carried by American ships) and American debt-servicing fees that were almost as great as the loans themselves. These conditions, not surprisingly, weakened reformist, pro-American governments as witnessed in the declining popularity of the pro-American conservative party of Jorge Alessandri. Ultimately, the 1960's closed with the only 'Progress' being marked in the increased number of dictatorships in Latin America.[38]

While the U.S. government sought to redefine its relationship to Latin America (substantially changed under Presidents Nixon and Ford), it was imperative that its existing system of diplomacy and aid not collapse, especially in Chile, the 'marquee' nation of the Alliance for Progress.[39] Accordingly, the CIA undertook to support presidential candidate Eduardo Frei, in 1964. Based on the CIA's experience of election support in Italy in their 1948 elections, conceived by veteran intelligence officer William Colby (director of the CIA in 1973), the U.S. channelled over $3 million to Frei's campaign, apparently without his knowledge.[40] Another six-years of pro-American government had been 'bought' and the hope was that by the time of the next presidential election significant support would not be required to guarantee a friendly government.

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[38] Lineberry, p. 183.
[39] *Covert Action in Chile*, Para C-2

Despite the marked success of the 1964 campaign and the sound defeat of Allende, the Americans forgot the lesson. Part of this may have reflected President Nixon's less activist programme that stated the U.S. was prepared to deal with Latin American nations pragmatically, in "mature partnerships" that would be based on trade rather than aid.[41] The '303 Committee', an inter-departmental committee that oversaw all U.S. intelligence activity, affirmed this stance in the directives issued to all U.S. intelligence operations.[42] Under 303 Committee guidance, the CIA reflected the more passive stance in its support for the Chilean congressional elections of 1969, where they spent a meagre $200,000 to have ten of twelve selected candidates win their seats. The CIA considered this a success and a much cheaper one than previous efforts in Chilean elections. It unfortunately ignored the fact that Christian Democrat portion of the general vote fell from 43% in 1961 to 31% in the 1969 congressional poll.[43]

Assuming an unqualified and cheap success in this election seems to have removed any sense of worry in the 303 Committee about Chilean political events, and it was not until April 15, 1969 that the attention of the U.S. Government turned its eyes back to quiet distant Chile.[44] That country was entering into the preliminary moves preceding an election. Salvador Allende was running again as the candidate for the socialist-communist coalition, this time going by the name of Popular Unity (*Unidad Popular* or UP). In opposition was the PDC candidate Radomiro Tomic and former-President Jorge Alessandri running as an independent. On April 15, during a regular briefing on covert intelligence gathering in Latin America, the 303 Committee was made aware of the results of the congressional elections and were briefed on the initial breakdown of the upcoming presidential election. Though urged to begin action by individuals within the CIA and contacts within Chile, "The members [of the committee] decided that [Jorge] Alessandri's prospects are reasonably good but decided no immediate steps are necessary since the presidential candidates are not yet formally declared."[45] They would review the subject in March 1970, after the formal declaration of candidates. CIA director Richard Helms cautiously "observed that a great deal of preliminary work is necessary, and CIA has learned through experience than an election operation will not be effective unless an early enough start is made."[46]

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[40] Willian Colby and Peter Forbath, *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA* (New York, 1978) p. 191. Cf. Falcoff, *Modern Chile*, p. 203, who puts the figure at $4 million. Also Cf. Hersh, p. 260, who puts the figure as high as $20 million!

[41] *Covert Action In Chile*, C-1-1.

[42] The '303 Committee' was named after the room in which it met in the Federal Government Building in Washington.

[43] *Covert Action In Chile*, C-1-1.

Chile—one might suppose—could have continued on a peaceful path of Christian Democratic government and quiet but effective social reform if the U.S. had repeated a 1964 style campaign in the 1970 election. This, however, was not the case. The next time the committee (Now renamed the '40 Committee' by 'National Security

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[44] Memorandum, "Proposed Agenda: Meeting of the 303 Committee", 15 April 1969.
[45] Memorandum, "Minutes of the meeting of the 303 Committee 15 April 1969," 17 April 1969.
[46] Ibid.

Decision Memorandum 40'[47]) met was in March of the following year, where it was decided, based on a joint CIA-State Department paper, that the U.S. should not support *any* of the three candidates for the presidency.[48] Rather than support one candidate, the 40 Committee supported the position paper and recommended the mounting of a "spoiling campaign" against Allende. This would encompass activities designed to highlight the danger of a UP government and Allende as president, without actively supporting either of the two opposition candidates. One Chilean Senator, Pedro Ibanez (the son of a former Chilean President) appealed directly to the U.S. Government on behalf of Alessandri while the former was in Washington in March of 1970, openly raising campaign funds for the latter. He requested U.S. assistance and financial support for the Alessandri campaign "because the Communist candidate must be beaten."[49] The Vice-President's office, to which he made the request, rejected the offer as dangerous, for it put the U.S. "in a position of taking all the political risks of supporting Alessandri without any of the intended benefits."[50] Indeed few within the American government were keen on heavily influencing the election at all, and the State Department was "as a whole…against" direct support for one candidate.[51] In their decision the 40 Committee ignored a warning from the embassy that "there is a real danger that the non-Marxist forces will sharply divide the electorate that provided [the PDC] the margin of victory

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[47] Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 660. Christopher Hitchens, in *Harper's Magazine*, "The Case Against Henry Kissinger, Part II" March 2001, P. 50, is wrong on this point. Cf. note 38 in this chapter.
[48] Memorandum, 40 Committee, "Political Action Related to the 1970 Chilean Presidential Election," 5 March 1970.
[49] Memorandum (Office of the Vice President), Kent Crane to Henry Kissinger, "Elections in Chile," 25 March, 1970.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Memorandum, "Political Decisions Related to our Covert Action Involvement…," 20 August, 1970.

…in 1964."[52] Regardless, the 40 Committee believed it would be possible to 'beat somebody with nobody,' and subsequently authorised less than $500,000 to achieve this task.[53] A total of $425,000 of the original half-million authorised was eventually spent.[54]

One might take a moment to examine the composition of the 40 Committee to determine the nature of its decisions. Representatives from the Departments of State and Defence, the CIA, as well as the Attorney General and National Security Advisor composed the committee.[55] It had been established to review and coordinate sensitive national security affairs between the various departments while maintaining a good degree of information security: the aim of the committee was to cease the duplication of efforts by the various departments. Moreover, the committee hoped to speed the sharing of information between departments that maintained their own intelligence gathering capabilities. Kissinger, the 'assistant to the president on national security affairs', was *ex officio* the chair of the committee. The 40 Committee was not established as an official cabinet or sub-cabinet level body and was therefore not subject to oversight by the Congress. Because of this lack of congressional control, Kissinger was able to use the informal inter-departmental structure of the committee as a locus for ensuring executive control over American covert operations. Kissinger, if he did often use the committee to throw around executive power, also knew the limits of his own expertise: during the early days of the 1970 election he was happy to go along with the suggestions of his advisors, as he knew little about Latin America and viewed it as an international backwater.[56] As an example of the low relevance Kissinger assigned to Latin America in world affairs, he once snidely referred to Chile as "a dagger pointed at the heart of Antarctica."[57]

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[52] Cable (Department of State Airgram no. A-283), "The Chilean Situation: A Personal Assessment," 1 September, 1969.
[53] Nathaniel Davis, p. 5.
[54] Memorandum (for the record), "Overview Statements on CIA Involvement in Chile in 1970," 20 February 1973.
[55] Hitchens, Part 1, p. 40.

In general, the American funds were split between two distinct efforts. The first was to subsidise anti-Allende media reports. This was a prodigious effort, and between the beginning of the campaign and Allende's eventual election, over 700 broadcasts, editorials and articles trumpeted the dangers, both political and fiscal, of an Allende government. The CIA placed these directly or through hired intermediaries.[58] Complementing this was an effort to spread anti-Allende propaganda in the streets. The CIA hired teams of youths to spray paint slogans such as "Your Wall," to suggest the common method of summary execution that would occur in the event of an Allende victory.[59] A fringe effort included American private capital. ITT, a U.S. company with vast assets in Chile, asked for and received CIA 'trade craft' instruction on the methods to transfer funds to the Alessandri campaign, which they did. The subsequent public controversy over ITT funding of anti-Allende parties has been adequately covered elsewhere and will not be discussed here.[60]

As Allende's popularity rose, so did the controversy in American government circles concerning their own actions in Chile. First, it was becoming evident that the

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[56] Hersch, p. 263. When a Chilean minister from Frei's cabinet accused Kissinger of knowing nothing about South America, Kissinger responded "No, and I don't care."
[57] Hitchens, part 1, p. 53.
[58] Jerry W. Knudson, "Allende to Pinochet: Crucible of the Chilean Press 1970-1984," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, Vol 6, 1987, p. 44.
[59] William Blum, *Killing Hope* (New York), pp. 206-208.
[60] The most authoritative voice on this is Jack Anderson, the *Washington Post* columnist who broke the story. "ITT Hope of ousting Allende Remote", *Washington Post*, 28 March 1972. See also, Hersh, *The Price of Power*, chapter 21 *in passim*.

'spoiling campaign' was achieving little. In a cable on June 18, 1970, Ambassador Korry reported:

> the trend lines for the past month: continued decline of Alessandri, stagnation of Tomic and gathering strength of Allende…Unless altered, these trends could well culminate in the election of Allende as President…It is clear that a good deal more in excess of [security deletion] according to our calculations will be required to make this effort [successful].[61]

The policy of not assisting any particular candidate, a policy championed by the State Department, also came into question. NSC Latin-American specialist 'Pete' Vaky argued on June 26 that "perhaps we should aid Tomic to at least come in second,"[62] though this was rejected out of hand, for reasons not fully explained. Furthermore, there was debate between the State Department and the Ambassador, the latter supported by the CIA, as to the threat posed by an Allende presidency. The State Department view, as published on July 30, 1970, in the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), was that Allende would not oppose the United States and would not destabilise the Chilean democratic process. National Security Study Memorandum 97 (NSSM 97), published on August 18, 1970 (though produced and reviewed over the course of several days by the "Interdepartmental Group"), enforced the view of the CIA, NSC, and Ambassador Korry. NSSM 97 asserted that in an Allende victory "the world military balance of power would not be significantly altered…" but that "the political and psychological costs would be considerable."[63] Though both now agreed that Allende would seek "the suppression of free elections" the NSC view of events had triumphed, and from this point onwards the State Department was effectively minimised in decision-making on Chile.[64]

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[61] Cable (Cable), Korry to NSC, 18 June 1970.
[62] Memorandum, Vaky to Kissinger, 26 June 1970.
[63] Memorandum, "Policy Decisions Related to Our Covert Action in the September 1970 Chilean Presidential Election," 15 September 1970.

The supremacy of the NSC in forming policy for the Chilean elections brought a more decisive and unitary tone to policy formation—though by no means did it end the inter-agency wrangling. Starting with NSSM 97 in mid-August, the NSC began to act on the assumption—glaringly obvious to those at the embassy in Santiago—that Allende would win a plurality on September 4, the election day. At this point, no plotting or conspiracy with Chileans had been authorised. On August 11, Korry submitted an assessment of the situation in Chile, but prefaced it with the warning that "the prohibitions imposed by the [State] dept on this emb [*sic*] [security deletion] make my following comments of dubious value since they do not encompass firm knowledge of the thinking of key men."[65] As late as 31 August 1970, the CIA was requesting (from the 40 Committee) permission to begin the collection of "the political intelligence required to plan and to implement a political action programme" in the event of an Allende victory or plurality at the polls.[66]

It appeared to the 40 Committee that things were getting back on track. The pernicious and vacillating (in their opinion) input of the State Department was successfully minimised and the Ambassador was requesting permission to let the CIA agents collect vital intelligence. The consensus lasted no longer than a few short days, due to certain assertions of NSSM 97. This 'study document' presented four options for American action in the case of an Allende victory, based on the supposition of his winning of a plurality in the polls.[67] It was also based on a particular quirk of the Chilean constitution. In this constitution, if one candidate lacked a simple majority in the election the two leading candidates would go to a congressional run-off vote, where a combined session of the Chilean congress would choose the next president. Historically, however, the congress would simply confirm the candidate with the plurality and the vote was scheduled for October 24, 1970.[68] The first option listed in NSSM-97 was to leave Chile to its own devices, but this option was dismissed out of hand. The second option, also immediately rejected, was to continue the anti-Allende spoiling campaign into the post-election/pre-ratification phase. Third, it recommended that the U.S. seek a way to influence the Chilean congress to make them elect Alessandri instead of Allende. The fourth option was to foment a military uprising to prevent Allende from coming to power.

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[64] Memorandum, 40 Committee, "Options in Chilean Presidential Election," 31 August 1970.
[65] Cable, "To Crimmins from Korry," 11 August 1970.
[66] Memorandum, "Options in Chilean Presidential Election During the Congressional Run-off Phase (5 September – 24 October 1970)," 31 August 1970.

It is at this point one first meets reference to 'Phase 2' (not to be confused with 'Track II', discussed in the next chapter), or the plan for the period between the vote on September 4 and the Congressional ratification vote on October 24. While there had been musings on this matter for a short while, "Up to now, the Ambassador and [CIA] Station have been under explicit instructions not to discuss or explore such an operation with any Chilean asset."[69] Following the decision to engage in 'phase 2' operations, Ambassador Korry began a series of meetings and golf dates with key individuals in Chilean politics, while CIA operatives quickly initiated relationships with members of the Chilean military. Korry, however, was a clever Ambassador and had already done much information gathering in the mean time. Indeed, the key communiqué leading to 'phase 2' was sent by Ambassador Korry on 11 August 1970. In this document, Korry outlined what would come to be known as the "Rube Goldberg" ploy[PIR1], or the "Frei Election Gambit."[70] Simply, it played on a technicality in Chilean law that forbade the President from having two *consecutive* terms. If there was even the shortest interregnum, a President would be able to sit again.[71] Korry described it thus:

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[67] NSSM-97, 18 August 1970.

[68] According to the Chilean constitution, the congressional vote happens 7 weeks after the election.

> [Deleted Name] came uninvited to the residence Sunday Aug 9 to speculate *inter alia* on this hypothetical situation. He noted that if Alessandri were elected by congress, the old man could keep his electoral pledge to respect the first majority by refusing to accept the presidency (Alessandri has always said he would not seek to govern without effective support and such renunciation would also be consistent with his view.) If Alessandri refused the congressional will, then, according to Pablo [President of the Senate], new elections would have to be called with the President of the Senate acting as interim president. Frei would be a candidate in the new election and would surely win an overwhelming majority…[72]

For this political légerdemain to work, however, required the input of the military[PIR2], for without the stability they could [PIR3]provide in the face of UP resistance, Frei could not move. Unfortunately, Frei would not approach the military on his own (Korry considered him 'a chicken'), and the Chilean military wanted Ambassador Korry to make their approach to the President for them. This Korry would not do, as his assessment of Frei suggested the man would refuse.[73] This led logically to the fourth option of NSSM 97, a military coup. On this matter Korry was equally adamant: "If Allende is inaugurated by constitutional process, it is the CT estimate that it is highly

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[69] Memorandum, Vaky to Kissinger, "Chile and Phase 2," 20 August 1970. Original underline.

[70] Inspired by the cartoons of Reuben Lucius Goldberg. "Goldberg's cartoons satirised machines and gadgets, which he saw as excessive. His cartoons combined simple machines and common household items to create complex, wacky, and diabolically logical machines that accomplished mundane and trivial tasks. His inventions became so widely known that Webster's Dictionary added "rube goldberg" to its listing, defining it as 'accomplishing by extremely complex, roundabout means what seemingly could be done simply.'" Taken from the website of the Purdue University 'Rube Goldberg Machine Contest,' at URL: http://news.uns.purdue.edu/UNS/rube/rube.history.html

[71] Luis Vitale, *Para Recuperar La memoria Historica* (Santiago, 1999), p. 184.

[72] Cable, Korry to Crimmins, 11 August 1970.

[73] Nathaniel Davis, p. 12.

unlikely that the conditions or motivations for a military overthrow of Allende will prevail."[74] The State Department, already opposed to what it considered too much U.S. intervention, concurred with Korry and railed at the idea of a coup:

> There is little substantial prospect that the Chilean armed forces would attempt to overthrown Allende, even with U.S. stimulation, and there is no way to judge whether the attempt would succeed if made. The risk that our hand would be exposed is real. Exposure in an unsuccessful coup would involve costs that would be prohibitively high in our relations in Chile, in the hemisphere, and elsewhere in the world. Even were the coup successful, exposure would involve costs only marginally less serious in those areas.[75]

While these internal debates were raging, the Chilean electoral process continued and on September 4, 1970 came to its culminating point. The polls closed, votes were counted, and the Chilean election commission announced the results. With almost three million votes cast, Allende had come out ahead by a less than two per cent with 36.6% of the vote, or a 39,000-vote lead. Alessandri came out with 35.2%. Allende had won a plurality by the slimmest of margins.

It was only now that the American government truly reacted to the possibility of an elected Marxist government in the western hemisphere. In a bitter cable from Santiago, Ambassador Korry wrote: "there is a graveyard smell to Chile, the fumes of a democracy in decomposition. They stank in my nostrils in Czechoslovakia in 1948 and they are no less sickening here today."[76] These messages whipped Washington into a frenzy. Kissinger, himself furious over events in Chile, remarked that President Nixon "was beside himself."[77] The 40 Committee convened on September 8, 1970 to discuss the events and what the U.S. could do. "In the lively discussion that followed" say the minutes of the meeting, "there was general agreement that more time to assess the situation was essential. It was also agreed that there was now little likelihood of success…" CIA chief Helms added that "a military *Golpe* against Allende would have little chance of success unless undertaken soon. He stated that even then there was no positive assurance of success because of the apolitical history of the military in Chile." [78] The State Department, now secure in their role as the policy doves when it came to Chile, again urged, in a memo issued the same day as the 40 Committee meeting, that "no encouragement be given to any extra-constitutional steps that the Chilean security services may contemplate."[79] Nonetheless, the 40 Committee meeting ended with a call by Kissinger for "a cold-blooded assessment of:

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[74] Cable, Korry to Crimmins, 11 August 1970.

[75] Memorandum, Charles A. Mayer to Ambassador Johnson, "NSSM-97: Extreme Option—Overthrow of Allende," 17 August 1970.

[76] Memorandum, Korry to State Dept, "The Communists Take over Chile," 12 September 70.

[77] Nathaniel Davis, p. 6.

> (1) the pros and cons and problems and prospects involved should a Chilean military coup be organised now with U.S. assistance, and
>
> (2) the pros and cons and problems and prospects involved in organising an effective future Chilean opposition to Allende.[80]

These were to be delivered for the next 40 Committee meeting, scheduled for September 14, 1970. Quite easily, Korry dampened the prospects for a coup, for in his response of September 12 he wrote: "we are saying in this 'cold-blooded assessment' [that] opportunities for further significant U.S.G. action with the Chilean military are nonexistent."[81] The Chilean Army "are a union of toy soldiers who need an order to move and that order can only come from Frei."[82]

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[78] Memorandum, "Minutes of the Meeting of the 40 Committee," 8 September 1970.

[79] Memorandum, McAfee to Ambassador Johnson, 8 September 1970.

[80] Memorandum, "minutes of the Meeting of the 40 Committee," 8 September 1970. See Memorandum (Dept of State) J.H. Crimmins to Mr. Getz, September 14, 1970, for Kissnger as source of the term "cold – blooded assessment."

[81] Memorandum, "Ambassador's Response to State…", Korry to State, 12 September 1970.

[82] Ibid.

This left the 'Rube Goldberg' plan as the only star of hope dazzling the minds in Washington. Yet it was not clear to Korry that it had a good chance of success. With Alessandri's public announcement of the plan on September 9, the ploy "was sputtering into action" said Korry, but "it is still a long shot."[83] The 40 Committee meeting of September 14 "covered at length and in some detail the changing panorama in Santiago and focused on the Frei re-election gambit...."[84] The cable sent to Korry outlined that this was the U.S.'s last best hope of securing the Chilean presidency from Allende's hands.

Yet not long after this, Korry admitted that there was only the slimmest chance that the Rube Goldberg plan would actually succeed. "President Frei's attitude is very clear to me: He is 100% opposed to Allende but he will not repeat not move unless (a) he is convinced he has a certainty of winning the fight and (b) he has a moral base to justify his struggle."[85] These conditions would not be met: "the political plan is much more tenuous and diffuse than Korry had originally indicated."[86] In fact, as events in Chile progressed, it became apparent that there was no hope for the Rube Goldberg plan. The PDC would negotiate 'A decree of democratic guarantees', their votes would swing to Allende, and he would win the congressional vote.[87]

"I find Korry's answer very unsatisfactory and I believe we are now in a most delicate and difficult position,"[88] said Vaky the day after the 40 Committee meeting. Several days earlier he had started to realise the ineffectiveness of American actions in Chile. In Vaky's "firm opinion:...(a) we don't really know enough about what's going on to make any reasonable judgements; the situation is too fluid, and (b) trying to cope with the situation by drawing up plans and considering them in committees is useless. Things move too fast....[and] Korry may not now be objective and may commit us to things we don't really want."[89] One can see the development of a plan in Vaky's head, one that would lead to much more serious dealings in Chile and one that would eventually circumvent the normal chain-of-command for covert actions. "The troubles are these" reported Vaky in another memorandum to Henry Kissinger:

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[83] Cable, Ambassador Korry to Secretary of State, 10 September 1970.
[84] Cable, Under Secretary Johnson to Ambassador Korry, 15 September 1970.
[85] Memorandum, Ambassador Korry to Under-Secretary Johnson, 16 September 1970.
[86] Memorandum, Vaky to Kissinger, 14 September 1970.
[87] NSC Report, "Review of Political and Military Options In Chilean Electoral Situation," 14 September 1970.

> --State is timid and unsympathetic; it will provide neither the imaginative leadership nor the tight coordinated overview we need.
>
> --[security deletion of the next three points]
>
> --There is neither enthusiasm nor consensus among agencies up here for doing any overall planning and thinking. Hence we tend to react to what happens in Santiago, and ideas about new things to mesh into the operation are neither forthcoming or—if they are—are implemented [in]adequately.
>
> --The 40 Committee does not have the time for this kind of close supervision, and the time-lag would make it impossible anyway.[90]

While Vaky goes on to recommend that some 'expert' be sent to run the 'phase 2' plan under the ambassador's guidance, a different set-up emerges at the recommendation of Kissinger, who perhaps put more emphasis on Vaky's final but vague suggestion that things would go better if State, CIA and 40 Committee were all stripped of control over Chile, and "the White House gives...the directive."[91]

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[88] Memorandum, "Korry's Reply to 40 Committee Cable," Vaky to Kissinger, 16 September 1970. Original underline.

[89] Memorandum, Vaky to Kissinger, "Chile—40 Committee Meeting (today)," 14 September 1970.

[90] Memorandum, Vaky to Kissinger, "Chile—Our Modus Operandi," 14 September 1970.

[91] Ibid.

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The End of Track I

So ended the first 'track' of the U.S. government's efforts to prevent the ascension of Salvador Allende to the presidency. As the CIA reported,

> A total of $153,000 was spent in this effort to prevent the accession of Allende to the presidency by attempting to induce various Chilean groups, notably the Christian Democratic Party, the Armed Forces and a number of independent organizations and individuals to use legislative or military means to thwart his investiture.[92]

While 'Track I'—as it would come to be known to a very few people—did continue into 1971 and even further, its essential purpose had already come to naught. There was no cataclysm or explosion, merely intense frustration at the White House—Nixon and Kissinger, essentially—that the other players were not getting the necessary job done. With the failure of the 'Rube Goldberg' gambit and the failure of the Military and President Frei to intervene on behalf of a constitutional effort to prevent Allende's election by the congress, there was little that could be done by the Ambassador and his staff to influence events. These individuals had been telling the White House as much for several weeks: they had no hope of preventing Allende's election due to the tolerant nature of the Chilean electorate and political class. Anti-Allende efforts had begun far too late to work their subtle way to what the Americans viewed as success and the decision to not support one of Allende's opponents was clearly a tactical mistake. All of these factors mattered little to Kissinger. He wished to achieve Nixon's vague aim of keeping Allende from power, and to September 15 the State Department, Ambassador and CIA (through its normal channels) had proved unable to achieve anything towards this aim.

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[92] Memorandum, "Overview Statements on CIA involvement in Chile in 1970," 20 February 1973.

Under 'Track I,' the American government did seek to block the election of Salvador Allende. Their actual efforts, however, did not extend past funding for anti-Allende propaganda and some rather ham fisted efforts at influencing the Chilean Congress. Almost all of the government agencies involved, while opposed to an Allende government, did not think that it was possible to prevent his electoral victory or ratification as President. Only in the Kissinger-controlled NSC was there any true drive to actively prevent Allende's assumption of the Presidency, and they lacked the ability to influence events independent of the Ambassador and CIA Chilean 'Country team' (CT). Ultimately, the American 'decision cycle' during the time-period in question was too slow to affect events. When the Ambassador and CIA were finally put into action, their efforts came too late to achieve a satisfactory outcome—a fact they fully realised at the time

Regardless, the 40 Committee meeting of September 14 had been a watershed. For it was at this meeting, as we see in the comments of Pete Vaky, that Kissinger and the NSC decided to seize direct control of events, and to remove the cumbersome chain of the 40 Committee, State Department, and even the Ambassador. On September 16, a memorandum was issued titled "Genesis of Operation Fubelt" which directed the CIA to begin operations to "prevent Allende coming to power."[93] From this decision the NSC initiated what was soon titled 'Track II', or the secret effort to thwart Allende, an effort executed without the knowledge of the State Department, the 40 Committee, or the

Ambassador in Chile. Track II would operate parallel to the failing (or failed) efforts of the Ambassador, which now came to be called 'Track I' by those who knew of both.

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[93] Memorandum (for the record), "Genesis of Project Fubelt," 16 September 1970 (original document is marked "17 September" but the date is crossed out and "16 September" is written it. The significance or reason for this correction is unknown, though the error may be simply clerical.

Chapter 3

Maximum Effort Achieved

The Assassination of General Schneider and Other Events to November 3, 1970

> "What sluggards, what cowards have I brought up in my
> court, who care nothing for their allegiance to their lord!
> Who will rid me of this meddlesome priest?"
> --King Henry II, *attributed*

With Allende's plurality in the polls on September 4, 1970, American thinking on how to keep Allende from office changed dramatically. So sure was the American government that Allende and his coalition would be defeated, as in the 1964 election, that they were caught entirely unprepared for the next stage of their policies towards Chile. Undeterred by the failure of the Santiago Embassy to deny Allende his presidency by constitutional manoeuvring, President Nixon set out after September 15 to deliver a clear and forceful directive for subsequent operations in Chile. While the actions caused by this directive lasted but ten weeks, their unintended results have served to condemn American actions ever since.

September 15 to November 3 of 1970 is perhaps the darkest and most damning episode of American operations against Allende. It starts with the same presidential edict mentioned above, and then introduces 'Track II', the secret programme aimed at preventing Allende's inauguration. Through these few weeks the CIA were actively seeking to foment a coup in Chile, and along with their government were unequivocal about their desire to see Allende kept from power. Near the end of this period, the commander of the Chilean armed forces, General René Schneider, was killed in an alleged kidnap attempt.

Schneider's assassination is the keystone in many arguments critical of American intervention in Chile. The argument, as in Hitchens' article, is constructed like this: 'The Americans conspired to kill Schneider and start a coup in 1970, the US continued to conduct covert operations in Chile, and then Allende was killed in a coup in 1973; therefore it is clear that the Americans conspired to kill Allende and bring General Augusto Pinochet to power, by coup, in 1973.'[1] Hersh merely asserts "no document will ever be found... to describe CIA plans or White House directions to murder Salvador Allende" but leaves the example of the Schneider assassination as clear evidence that they were attempting to do so: "Why else would [the CIA] be there?"[2]

This is not the case. Through examination of the Schneider assassination and Track II programmes the available evidence suggests that the American government knew they had far less ability to affect events in Chile than they previously supposed. Moreover, they learned that they could do little to steer or control the Chilean army, a professional, loyal and fiercely nationalistic body. Indeed, the Chilean army would most certainly have disagreed with the suggestion that they needed American help to do anything at all. A proud and professional body, the officers of the Chilean army believed that they could prevent an Allende government without the benefit of any American help save for equipment.

The main difference between Track I and Track II was not that the latter was coup-oriented and the former was not: both had this as their objective. The real difference was that knowledge of Track II activities was restricted to a very small number of people and did not involve the participation of Ambassador Korry or President Frei.[3] Ultimately, however, the evidence does not indicate that the President, Henry Kissinger, nor any other branch of the U.S. Government sought to assassinate General Schneider (or anyone else) in the period approaching the ratification or inauguration of Allende in late-October/early November 1970. While the U.S. Government, at the direction of Nixon and Kissinger, did seek a coup, and were aware of coup plots, the US did not plan any coup in 1970 nor did it authorise or prompt the assassination of General Schneider as is commonly believed by such writers as Gabriel Kolko, Seymour Hersh or Christopher Hitchens.[4]

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[1] See Hitchens, part I , *in passim.*
[2] Hersh, pp. 292-293.

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On September 15, 1970, President Richard Nixon called CIA director Richard Helms, Henry Kissinger and Attorney General John Mitchell into the Oval Office to give executive direction for US policy towards Chile and Allende. As William Colby has described it, "Nixon was furious" and was convinced that an Allende victory would assure the spread of Castro's revolution to Chile and the rest of Latin America.[5] The message he delivered at the meeting reflected his anger. The hand-written minutes taken by Director Helms are revealing:

> One in 10 chance, perhaps, but save Chile:
> Worth Spending

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[3] "Alledged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders," 94th congress, 1st session, US Senate, Nov 1975, p. 232. Henceforward 'Alleged Plots.'

[4] Kolko, p. 220. Hersh, pp. 288-290, Hitchens, Part 1, *in passim.*

[5] Colby, p. 303.

> Not concerned risks involved
> No involvement of Embassy
> $10,000,000 available, more if necessary
> full-time job—best men we have
> game plan
> make the economy scream
> 48 hours plan of action.[6]

Helms, clearly understanding these statements, commented: "if I ever carried a marshal's baton in my knapsack out of the Oval Office, it was that day."[7] The administration moved quickly to implement the President's directive, which was to be overseen by Henry Kissinger. On the following day, William V. Broe, the CIA's Chief of Western Hemisphere Division, circulated the first memo derived from the new directive through the CIA. It re-capped the President's directive, indicated that the Departments of State and Defence were excluded from the planning (so removing the US Ambassador to Chile and his Defence Attaché from the loop), and appointed one Mr. Thomas Karamessines as the head of the project.[8] While the removal of the other departments seems extreme, it was viewed as necessary to the secrecy of the operation, and was moreover within the President's authority with regards to covert activities.[9] The first Track II situation report was issued on September 17, and indicated that the command structure for the Chile operation had been established, and that "units will operate under the cover of the [deletion] 40 Committee approval of September 14 for political action and the probing for military possibilities to thwart Allende."[10]

Helms later commented, while under interrogation by a Senate committee, that he did not believe that assassination was within the guidelines given to him by the President,

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[6] 'Alledged Plots,' p. 227.
[7] Ibid., p. 228.
[8] Memorandum for the Record, "Genesis of Project Fubelt", 16 September 1970.
[9] Colby, p. 303.

"and I had made that clear to my fellows."[11] (This may be so, but no memo has come to light that explicitly states that assassination was considered out of the question.) With these marching orders, several 'false-flag' officers (CIA officers operating under false passports—see note) were sent to Chile starting on September 27 to begin contacts with Chilean military personnel considered to be too dangerous for Embassy-based CIA agents to meet themselves.[12] With the assistance of the false-flag officers, the CIA made 21 contacts with Chilean officers in both the military and Carabineros between October 5 to October 20, 1970. When contacted by these agents, "Those Chileans who were inclined to stage a coup were given assurances of strong support at the highest levels of the US government…"[13]

In their attempts to find men who were in favour of a coup, the CIA came to quickly understand the nature of the problem. As had been noted by many Chileans and Americans, the Chilean military had a strongly constitutionalist nature which was championed by its new Commander-in-Chief, General René Schneider.[14] Indeed, it was even written into the Chilean constitution that: "*La fuerza publica es esencialmente obediente. Ningun cuerpo armado puede deliberer.*"[15] In May of 1970, during the election campaign, Schneider had told the newspaper *El Mercurio* that the Army would respect the constitutional process and make no move at intervention.[16] This 'Schneider Doctrine', angered many in the staunchly conservative military services (army, navy and

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[10] Memorandum, "[Deletion] Situation Report #1", 17 September, 1970.
[11] 'Alledged Plots,' p. 228.
[12] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "As you will be advised", 27 September 1970. A "False Flag officer" or "False-flagger" is an agent who operates under a forged third-party passport. False-flaggers are used to increase the 'plausible deniability' of an operation should it be compromised.
[13] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "Highest Levels Here Continue", 07 October 1970.
[14] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Effort to Contact and Influence Chilean Military Figures", 2 October 1970.
[15] Vitale, p. 181.

air force).[17] Despite the majority that had voted against Allende, his supporters could be expected to react to any coup attempt, a prospect that raised the possibility of mass protests, street violence or even civil war. To thwart such violence and to secure a post-coup government, the military, acting as a whole, would need to be rallied behind the leaders. The officers of the Chilean armed forces were largely drawn from the middle class, and as such were conservative and anti-Allende, but their commander-in-chief "General Rene Schneider...will only agree to military intervention if forced to do so."[18] The conclusion drawn from this situation by the Chilean military's chief plotters was that Schneider would have to be convinced to join the pro-interventionist camp soon. If he persisted in his constitutionalist stance, he would be removed from his position, by some means, in order to allow the military to intervene against the inauguration of an Allende government.

Circumstances were such that Schneider was the constitutionalist chief of a military that was in favour of military intervention. The presidency of Eduardo Frei had tried the patience of many conservative army officers and plotting was rife within the military as a whole.[19] Mutinies and small military revolts were becoming the subject of some concern, made more pressing by the revolt of the "Tacna" tank regiment (which was ostensibly about pay for soldiers) in October of 1969. During the "Tacnazo" rebellion several army generals had fled the country or had been removed from command after being accused of plotting a coup.[20] Furthermore, a CIA intelligence report of

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[16] Figueroa, p. 51. (see note 1)
[17] Vitale, p. 187. See also Sigmund, p. 99
[18] Memorandum, Chile Station to CIA HQ, "Intelligence" 26 September 1970.
[19] Albert L. Michaels, "Background to a Coup" paper presented at the State University of New York, 18-19 October 1974. (Buffalo: State University of New York, 1975) p. 9.
[20] Memorandum, Chile Station to CIA HQ, "Intelligence" 26 September 1970.

September 26, 1970 reported that a number of former Chilean Army officers were attempting to infiltrate leftist groups, including the MIR, in the hopes of conducting terrorist acts that would compel an anti-Communist crack down by Frei and the army. Others were working in primarily civilian rightist groups that had the same aim. Of this prolific plotting, the CIA was even able to report that "President Frei taking no direct part in planning but close supporters such as Perez said to be acting in his name."[21] Was everyone plotting against Allende? Korry doubted this and, on October 6, 1970 he sent a message to Under Secretary Johnson with regards to coup plotting amongst the Chilean army. He outlined one particular plan unwittingly related by a young Chilean officer to a CIA co-optee, but concluded by saying

> less precise but equally lurid information has been reaching us from many quarters and it usually proves to be nothing more than wishful thinking. This report must be considered in the same vein...I would prefer that we ceased to check out all such reports and to be totally surprised by whatever might develop in the armed forces. In the present circumstances it is a waste activity for all concerned. Hence I am instructing [CIA station] to desist from the normal efforts to learn of possible military moves.[22]

Ambassador Korry concurred that the Chilean military would need to be acting as a whole if military intervention were to succeed, but simultaneously he doubted that such intervention was possible at all. He reported to Washington, a full month before the beginning of Track II, that "An attempt to rob Allende of his triumph by, say, a General Viaux, who has a certain mystique within the army, would, in all likelihood, fail in a post-congressional decision period and be almost impossible post-inauguration...."[23] By mentioning his name Korry was trying to exorcise the influence of this particular individual, the centre of coup speculation, from the plans of many in Washington. General Viaux was a former Chilean army officer, forced to retire after he led the "Tacnazo" rebellion of October 1969. Though viewed by many as an unstable fool, and though he was no longer in the military, the CIA assessment showed that he had "extensive support among non-coms and junior officers."[24] Led by a general who respected the constitutionality of the Allende government, and without a serving general officer to centralize the plotting against the Communist Allende government, the servicemen of the Chilean military "look to General Viaux for inspiration."[25]

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[21] Memorandum, CIA Intelligence note to File, 23 September 1970.
[22] Memorandum, Ambassador Korry to Under-Secretary Johnson, 6 October 1970.
[23] Memorandum, Korry to Crimmins, 11 August, 1970.

Ignorant of the new Track II initiatives, Korry was demanding "Washington consultations noting that all elements in the mission accept Allende's presidency as assured."[26] This was an accurate statement, as at all levels of the CIA they considered the task of thwarting Allende a 'mission impossible,' for as one CIA officer said, "the idea of a military overthrow had not occurred to us as a feasible solution."[27] Six weeks is not a long time to begin with, but when one needs to ensure secrecy while attempting to infiltrate operatives and promote a coup, it becomes incredibly short. With almost no contacts at the beginning of the operation, and little knowledge of the key players, the CIA officers in the field considered 'Operation Fubelt' to be a "crash endeavour."[28] On a more alarming note, Korry warned both his own CIA team and the State Department that to attempt a coup with climate and personnel at hand was to court a failure as massive and damaging to American interests as the Bay of Pigs.[29] This warning was ignored in Washington.

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[24] Memorandum for the Record, CIA, 23 September, 1970.
[25] Memorandum, Chile Station to CIA HQ, "Intelligence" 26 September 1970.
[26] Cable, "Track I Propaganda Placements," 10 October 1970. Original underline.
[27] Hersh, The Price of Power, p. 277.
[28] Cable, [CIA] Situation Report #1, 17 September 1970.

With Korry's influence sidelined by the new dictate, the CIA HQ in Langley under William Broe (reporting to Kissinger) was now directing planning against Allende, with all the pressure for success being driven by Kissinger and the President. With little time to accomplish the task assigned, the CIA in Santiago went against their better judgment and began communications with the aforementioned Viaux, as well as two serving officers, General Camilo Valenzuela, who commanded the Santiago Garrison, and Admiral Huerta, commander at Valparaiso. These latter two did not have anything close to definite plans and so for the time being were kept on the side-lines. Viaux took the spotlight. As early as September 23 the CIA was reporting that Viaux "was in touch with active duty army officers who may or may not decide to move."[30] They noted, however, that as a retired officer, no plan by Viaux could succeed without the help of the regular army.

With the false-flaggers now established and operating in Chile, and with the secret assistance of the Santiago military attaché, the CIA in Santiago set out to determine what real support Viaux had amongst the army. The answer came back within a few days, noting that "COS met with [false flag officer] who said he had talked with General Viaux, and as a consequence is convinced that Viaux has no military support."[31] This was troubling to the CIA, who passed to their HQ the opinion that Viaux was not only dangerously unstable, but likely to lead whatever forces he could muster into a premature action that would do the anti-Allende forces more harm than good. They decided, on their own accord, to stop working with Viaux for the time being: "Santiago Station was advised to use whatever channel available to persuade Viaux to hold off his action until a more opportune moment...Since a mini-coup (which is what Viaux is most likely to produce) would be counterproductive to our objective [name deleted] has been advised to do everything possible to prevent a Viaux move, at least for the time being."[32] The CIA in Chile began to look at General Valenzuela, the serving officer. While his plans were not at all solid, Valenzuela was at least in a position to command real troops in a coordinated action, and he was not (possibly) insane.[33] There was some indication that Valenzuela was involved in Viaux's planning, and so the CIA took the opportunity to contact him directly:

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[29] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Ambassador called in Defence Attache and DCOS", 08 October 1970.
[30] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "There is a possibility that coup attempt," 23 September 1970.
[31] Memorandum Intelligence Note to File, "Track II," 10 October 1970.

> 2. [CIA agent] will see Genl Camilo Valenzuela, if possible, on [date deleted] Oct and brief him along these lines [CIA agent] will take opportunity to caution Valenzuela about precipitate moves by Genl Viaux (of which Valenzuela possibly cognizant).
> 3. [CIA false-flagger] who briefed COS evening [date del] Oct, promised attempt to contact Valenzuela [deleted]...will ask aforementioned to dissuade Viaux, without RPT without promising Viaux USG support for any later move. (FYI: [COS] relieved to learn [CIA asset] not goading on Viaux, which [we] would view as height of folly).
> 4. **Urge you do not covey impression that STA has sure fire method of halting, let alone triggering coup attempts.**[34] (original bold)

The fourth paragraph of this message makes a point repeated often by the CIA agents on the ground: they were not puppet masters, capable of fully controlling the Chilean officers they contacted. The message had already been passed that the U.S. favoured military intervention, but the Santiago CIA operatives did not want to bear responsibility for the unfortunate results of a coup led by a man such as Viaux. For "if

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[32] Memorandum, "Track II", 7 October 1970.
[33] Memorandum, "Track II", 5 October 1970.

Viaux moves on his own and succeeds (which is a distinct possibility) then we face the unpleasant prospect that Viaux's junta will be an autocratic, nationalistic military government, which may not necessarily be pro-U.S.. Accordingly, Viaux should still be considered only as an opportunity of last resort....A Viaux Government, though preferable to Allende, would be a tragedy for Chile and for the free world. A Viaux coup would only produce a massive bloodbath."[35] A bloodbath led by an uncontrollable maniac was not the aim of the mission, as the CIA understood it. In short, the right-wing was not attractive to the CIA or to the U.S. government, for it would ultimately be counter-productive. Associating themselves with dictatorial and bloodthirsty regimes would do very little to forward American efforts for increased influence in the region.

At this point it is important to note one thing that is taken for granted by the government officers writing these cables. To the modern reader, "military intervention" means a violent coup. In the case of Chile, however, what the CIA officers were looking for is, in the first instance, *not* a coup. Rather, they sought a version of the Rube Goldberg plan where, instead of parliamentary subterfuge, the Military would simple declare a state of emergency (or some other such context) to seize temporary power, justifying the dissolution of the government in order to call new elections. Chileans called this a 'white coup.'[36] The obstacle to this was "that army not as yet set to move and that Schneider Doctrine still conditions it reflexes."[37] Moreover, the U.S. was not going to run a coup for them. On October 6, Viaux approached the CIA and asked for

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[34] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, 7 October 1970. Original bold.
[35] Memorandum, "Long Range Solution," 9 October 1970.
[36] Robinson, p. 161. Also Gabriel Smirnow, *The Revolution Disarmed, Chile 1970-1973*. (New York, 1979), p. 111.
[37] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "It Reported," 13 October 1970.

weapons (comically maniacal "paralyzing gas grenades") to start an uprising.[38] The CIA in Santiago "turned down the proposal categorically," with the reason given that "[USG] would not provide arms if the *golpe* were to be made contingent on a favorable [USG] reaction. [USG] insists that the decision to move must be a [Chilean] decision."[39] This does not mean that a coup was entirely out of the minds of the CIA at this point, for there were routine exhortations on "seriousness of USG intent to attempt deny [the] presidency to Allende."[40] They wanted the Chileans to do it on their own, but found Viaux's plans "to be totally inadequate."[41]

Another problem with Viaux as a contact was his high profile as an anti-communist agitator. Having already led one military revolt, he was under constant scrutiny by the state security apparatus, and this made him a dangerous man to be in contact with: "It station's firm opinion that further contact with [name deleted] presents too great a risk potential and offers very little in return. Considering the way the [Colonel Wimert, Military Attaché]-Viaux relationship is unfolding we feel [Attaché] contact not worth maintaining...as we approach the 24th of October [Viaux] will just be too hot to handle."[42] To make matters worse, the CIA knew that the Chilean communist party had agents infiltrated close to Viaux and his associates. It would be foolish of the Americans to offer Viaux continued support if the PCCh would later be able to disclose American activities.[43] Viaux was a disaster waiting to happen and had to be kept at a distance.

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[38] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "Viaux Recontacted ASAP", 13 October 1970.

[39] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Arms to Start Uprising," 06 October 1970. While the terms CIA, USG and Chilean are all blanked from the document, a reading of the 2 full pages makes any other insertion inconsistent and unlikely.

[40] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "As Dialogue with Viaux Grows," 13 October 1970.

[41] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "In Fast Moving Situation," 10 October 1970

[42] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "It Station's Firm Opinion,"10 October 1970. That this letter referred to the Attaché can be determined by comparison of this cable to one cited in 'Alleged Plots.'

[43] Memorandum, "Track II", 12 October 1970.

While the CIA wanted to keep Viaux at arms-length, the pressure on the CIA in Santiago to come up with a 'solution' to the Allende problem was massive, as attested by many of the men who worked in and around the project.[44] The problem from the CIA's perspective, however, was that there was no viable solution in terms of coup plotters. Viaux, clearly, was megalomaniacal and uncontrollable, probably even anti-American.[45] Valenzuala and Huerta had no plans, no forces assembled, and were perhaps a bit scared of moving. But the White House (the "highest levels"[46]) was demanding a solution, a military solution, and "all other considerations are secondary."[47] The Santiago CIA station sent back what can only be called a snide and cynical reply. It is worth quoting at length:

> 1. Station has arrived at Viaux solution by process of elimination:
>
> a. Alto Mando (high command) solution cannot be achieved...
> b. [Frei Solution] cannot be achieved...
> c. Regimental commander solution. Station...lack requisite leverage to pry loose most commanders from their instinctive obedience to Alto Mando directives...
>
> 2. What can Viaux accomplish under optimum conditions? He can split armed forces...fencesitters will watch tide of battle before engaging themselves on either side. Carnage would be considerable and prolonged, i.e. civil war. Under best of circumstances, armed forces will break up and create unpredictable situation....
>
> 5. Above not intended to be exhaustive enumeration of some of key factors that ought to have hearing on your final determination. You have asked us to provoke chaos in Chile. Thru Viaux solution we provide you with formula for chaos which unlikely to be bloodless. To dissimulate U.S. involvement will clearly be impossible. Station [CIA] team, as you know, has given most serious consideration to all plans suggested by HQs counterparts. We conclude that none of them stand even a remote chance

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[44] Hersh, *The Price of Power*, p. 286
[45] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Fact May Not Be Able," 03 October 1970.
[46] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "Highest Levels Here Continue", 07 October 1970.
[47] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "Instructs You Contact Military", 07 October 1970.

> of achieving [USG] objective. Hence, Viaux gamble, despite high risk factors, may comment [sic] itself to you."[48]

In these pages the CIA COS in Santiago made dramatically clear the problems he was facing in carrying out a near impossible task that he was somehow supposed to construct from whole cloth. Construct a local coup in a country where no one was willing to start a coup was possible, but not if the U.S. wanted their own involvement to remain secret, and certainly not if they wanted it to be bloodless. As far as the Santiago station was concerned, Viaux was a dead end on all of these counts. Some days later Santiago sent another message to Langley: "After [COS?] debriefing, station would appreciate firm and realistic guidelines from headquarters on what objectives to pursue in further dealings with General Viaux."[49]

These comments from the Chile CT had achieved their intended aim. Following this cable a series of study papers were initiated at CIA headquarters into the implications of supporting Viaux. They were not terribly optimistic, one paper being titled "The Coup that Failed: The Effects on Allende and his Political Posture."[50] The conclusions were slowly dawning on the staff at Langley and the White House:

> "...in summary, there is little climate in Chile to encourage or sustain a military move at this time, but General Viaux continues to try with his major problems apparently being (a) a sure way of containing the high command, especially General Schneider in the early hours of a coup attempt and (b) a method of controlling the pro-Allende mobs which very probably would swarm through downtown Santiago in the event of a coup attempt."[51]

This paper, like others, covered the basic problems involved, and concluded that a Viaux coup would almost certainly result in American embarrassment and strengthening of Allende's position. It had become clear, due to the input of the CIA COS in Santiago, as well as the input of Ambassador Korry, that "Viaux did not have more than one chance in twenty—perhaps less—to launch a successful coup." The point had been made, and the Track II staff, Kissinger included, came to the conclusion that "...a coup climate does not presently exist. [Karamessines] noted that the highly unpredictable Gen. Viaux is the only individual seemingly ready to attempt a coup and expressed the view that his chances of mounting a successful one were slight....[Kissinger] observed that there presently appeared to be little the U.S. can do to influence the Chilean situation one way or another. Those present concurred."[52] This was acted upon the same day, and a directive was issued to the CIA in Santiago to cut off plotting with Viaux:

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[48] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Station has arrived at Viaux Solution", 10 October 1970.
[49] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "After Debriefing," 12 October 1970.
[50] Memorandum, "The Coup That Failed", 15 October 1970.

> ...It was decided by those present that the Agency must get a message to Viaux warning him against precipitate action. In essence our message was to state: 'We have reviewed your plans, and based on your information and ours, we come to the conclusion that your plans for a coup at this time cannot succeed. Failing, they may reduce your capabilities for the future. Preserve your assets...the time will come when you with all your other friends can do something. You will continue to have our support.'[53]

Many commentators have asserted that this message did not truly 'turn off' the Viaux plotting or, as Kissinger has stated, end Track II plotting entirely. Subsequent messages, however, shed some light on this controversial issue. One particular piece of evidence is a memorandum Kissinger wrote to the President on October 18, 1970. This lengthy memorandum starts by stating "It now appears certain that Allende will be elected President of Chile in the October 24 Congressional run-off elections. He will be

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[51] Memorandum, "Situation Report for Military Move," 13 October 1970.

[52] Memorandum for the Record, "Minutes of the 40 Committee Meeting, 14 October 1970", 16 October 1970.

[53] Memorandum of Conversation, "Dr. Kissinger, Mr. Karamessines, Gen. Haig at the White House," 15 October 1970.

inaugurated November 3."[54] It is clear that Kissinger accepted the reality briefed to him by Ambassador Korry and many other individuals involved in Chile. The next step, it is stated, is "the formulation of a specific strategy to deal with an Allende government."[55] Further statements in this same memo indicate why this step is being taken, as "Our capacity to engineer Allende's overthrow quickly has been demonstrated to be sharply limited."[56] Having ordered the end to US involvement with what they believed to be the only individual actively plotting a coup, the executive took the next logical step to plan for a coherent policy towards an Allende government.

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A Coup Plot Materializes

While the White House had finally decided to give up on Viaux, and were cementing their new plans for Chile, Viaux's own plans were solidifying. By October 14 the CIA had learned that the Viaux group had decided that the best way for them to trigger a coup was to remove General Schneider, by kidnapping, from Chile.[57] This would convince the Chilean military of the impending national chaos and therefore the need to prevent Allende from taking power. The military would then have to assume power to quell the burgeoning chaos and so open the way—as in the Rube Goldberg plan—for new elections that Frei could win. The initial date, the CIA learned, was set for October 17 "between 0200 – 0700".[58] Coincident with the White House decision to cease links with Viaux, a serving officer from the army approached the U.S. requesting funds for a similar 'kidnap Schneider' plan. While the assumption was made that he was 'fronting' for Viaux, the CIA decided to provide the individual with some funds to purchase weapons.[59] This was a last-ditch effort, and the CIA was told by another contact on the same day that "[Name deleted] believes that Viaux's attempt to kidnap Schneider will *not be made* and now sees no possibility for anything to happen prior 24 October....[CIA agent] reminded [Chilean contact] that US stands ready to help with anything plotting elements may need. [Chilean contact] replied "what we need is not money but a general with b***s."[60]

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[54] Memorandum for the President, NSC Document, "Chile—Immediate Operational Issues", 18 October, 1970.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Cable, Santago Station to CIA HQ, "Viaux Group Will Meet", 14 October 1970.

The appropriately equipped general was not far away. A message sent on October 16 noted "coup rumblings within and outside the military have increased in recent days."[61] General Valenzuela, still unsure of the necessity for a coup, arranged for a meeting with General Schneider on the evening of October 16 to attempt to convince the C-in-C of the need for the military to intervene. Unfortunately, the "meeting...turned out [to be a] complete fiasco."[62] The following night Valenzuela, now finally convinced of the need for direct action, sent a representative to meet with the U.S. military attaché, Colonel Wimert, in a dark corner of Santiago. The group requested three submachine-guns and tear-gas grenades, which the CIA HQ authorised Santiago to give them despite the fact that they were 'puzzled' by the need for them (they were delivered at 0200 hrs on

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[58] Ibid.

[59] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Summoned Morning", 16 October 1970.

[60] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Meeting Disaster Concerning Schneider", 16 October 1970. Italics added, though the censorship is authentic.

[61] Memorandum, "Intelligence Note", 16 October 1970. See also "Track II", 14 October 1970.

[62] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Meeting Requested", 16 October 1970.

22 October).[63] One cable makes it clear that those back in the U.S. were not entirely aware of the new evolutions in the Valenzuela plot, as CIA HQ had "several obvious questions:

> a. What happened between morning 17 October and evening 17 October to change [deleted] from despondency to measured optimism?
>
> b. Who, exactly, is involved in coup attempt?[64]

As it turned out, the plot was not significantly different from the one Viaux had planned, and which had been disclosed to the CIA on October 19. Schneider would be kidnapped when leaving a stag party that very evening. Once abducted, he would be flown to Argentina, and simultaneously Frei would resign and leave the country. The cabinet would resign, and a junta led by an unnamed General would dissolve Congress. Valenzuela was at pains to state that the dissolution of Congress was their only 'unconstitutional act.'[65] Indeed, it is stated by Valenzuela that both "extreme leftists and rightist leadership will be ...dispatched across border" in the Carabiniero sweeps to follow the coup.[66] Viaux, himself may even have been a target for arrest in the aftermath of a Valenzuela coup, as they would use the kidnapping to "justify a move against leftist and rightist extremists."[67] Viaux, though aware of the Valenzuela plot, was not involved.

The first attempt by the Valenzuela group to kidnap Schneider failed as his team "became nervous due to inexperience."[68] A second attempt on the following night also failed, and the CIA assured Valenzuela that "USG support for anti-Allende action continues."[69] Valenzuela, for his part, assured the Americans that the Chilean military was still set to move. While assurances were being traded, the CIA concluded that "since Valenzuela's group is apparently having considerable difficulty executing even the first step of its coup plan, the prospects for a coup succeeding or even occurring before 24 October now appears remote."[70] There would be no kidnapping, no coup.

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[63] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago, "Depending How Conversation Goes", 18 October 1970.
[64] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "Realize this Message", 19 October 1970.
[65] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Chronology of Events 18 October", 19 october 1970. Though listed under "chronology of events 12 October" the date is clearly 18 October both in context and when examined with a magnifying glass. Cf. 'Alleged Plots,' p. 244.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Memorandum, "Special Report", 22 October 1970.
[68] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Sent to Visit", 20 October 1970.

But, suddenly, events deviated from the anticipated script: Only five hours after the machine-guns were delivered to the Valenzuela group, a group of armed men ambushed General Schneider on his way to work. Schneider, drawing his sidearm, was shot by the attackers, who were part of Viaux's gang. The shooting had come just 48-hours before Allende was to be confirmed in a congressional vote. He died on the operating table on October 25. No coup immediately followed the shooting. On the morning of October 24, an intelligence summary produced in Langley stated: "Yesterday General Viaux informed some of his followers that a military coup would be attempted during the early hours of 24 October."[71] The cable continued: "it was agreed that given the short time span and the circumstances prevailing in Chile, a maximum effort has been achieved, and that now only Chileans themselves can manage a successful coup." But, the cable stated, "there has been thus far no indication that the conspirators intend to push on with their plans to overthrow the government.'[72]

After the assassination there was confusion among the CIA station in Santiago, as well as a degree of hope. They were not entirely sure who had launched the attack, and whether it was a kidnapping attempt or an assassination attempt. They hoped that the assassination was the beginning of a move against Allende, but there was no evidence that this was going to occur.[73] A state of emergency was imposed, Viaux and his gang surrendered, fled, or were arrested. The military and Carabineros were confined to barracks. Valenzuela was appointed as '*Jefe del Plaza* for Law and Order', and one General Prats filled the spot of the gravely injured Schneider. The UP reacted immediately, and there was tension that seemed to favour a coup, but "Santiago is quiet."[74] Whatever the intended result of the kidnapping/assassination was, it ultimately increased the desire of the politicians and most of the military to ensure that the constitutional process was followed. Though Valenzuela was in a powerful position and free to act, the mood had changed so dramatically that he did not. On Saturday, October 24, Allende was elected by the congress as president of Chile. There were 153 votes in favour with only 42 votes either against or abstaining.[75] The second attempt to prevent Allende from taking power had failed.

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[69] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "Request Contact General Valenzuela", 22 October 1970.
[70] 'Alleged Plots,' p. 245.
[71] Memorandum, "Track II", 24 October 1970.
[72] Ibid.

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American Intentions and Responsibilities

While a military move against Allende was unlikely from the very start, the assassination of Schneider guaranteed the collapse of American hopes. Clearly Schneider's death had not been in the interests of the American government. Could they have prevented it, and if so did they make any efforts to? What the Americans did and did not know about the assassination becomes clear in the message traffic immediately following the murder. A cable of October 22 relates intelligence to the effect that Viaux's gang were told that the latter's coup attempt would be carried out on that same date, to be initiated by "something big" that would take place in the early morning hours. The cable continued by speculating that "the assassination attempt on General Schneider, Commander-in-Chief of the Army...was very likely the "something big" which the plotters hope to use to initiate their coup efforts."[76] The uncertainty of the CIA can be ascribed to their lack of contact with Viaux, but also due to their lack of intelligence gathering assets. The CIA had started to pull out its 'false-flag' officers from Chile a week before the assassination, a move one would think unlikely if they were aware of a planned coup. A memo dated October 19, 1970 states "[Co-optee] not at all sanguine re chances perventing (sic) Allende from taking office and stressed fact that abortive coup now could spell end to any chance of success in future...[CIA agent] has done his work well and there are no further tasks for the false-flaggers at this time he will be instructed depart Santiago [del] October...."[77] Moreover, as of October 21 the COS in Santiago was developing post-inauguration asset-management plans.[78]

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[73] Memorandum, "Special Report", 22 October 1970.

[74] Memorandum, "Intelligence Note", 23 October 1970. See also Memorandum, "Track II", 24 October 1970.

It is also evident that the CIA did not have absolute knowledge of Schneider's assassins. Another cable, written on November 3, 1970, discussed a review of the assassination by the CIA COS in Santiago, which when talking of a particular Chilean contact stated that this man "confirmed neither he nor [name sec del] involved in

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[75] Sigmund, p. 123. See also Memorandum, Intelligence, "Recent Developments in Chile", 2 November 1970.
[76] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Supporters of General Viaux", 22 October 1970.
[77] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Suggested Retired Captain", 19 October 1970.

Schneider assassination."[79] If the Chilean CIA station was still discussing who may or may not have been involved in the assassination, and was seeking confirmation from its Chilean contacts, it indicates that they did not have firm knowledge to begin with. If they had planned the attack, would they not have known who executed the plan? One cable discusses their lack of sure knowledge:

> Station unaware if assassination was premeditated or whether it constituted bungled abduction attempt...We know that Gen. Valenzuela was involved [sec del] we have reason for believing that Gen Viaux and numerous associates fully clued in, but cannot prove or disprove that execution of attempt against Schneider was entrusted to elements linked with Viaux. Important factor to bear in mind is that Armed Forces, and not retired officers or extreme rightists, set Schneider up for execution or abduction...Before trying to anticipate further course of events station would like to await events of 23rd Oct which will obviously be decisive.[80]

The assassination took the station by surprise, and they were at first uncertain if the weapons they had provided to Valenzuela's groups were responsible for Schneider's death, a prospect they viewed with some worry.

Were the American weapons used in the attempt to kidnap Schneider, a kidnapping that turned into murder? The answer is a simple no. One CIA cable from Chile, sent on October 29, hints at the confusion in Santiago in the aftermath of the assassination, and the trouble it caused the CIA station in determining what was going on. The message says that marshal law made their work difficult, but that on October 28 they were "able to make first contact with [name deleted]...[deletion] stated that when first heard of Schneider's assassination on radio he was quite upset but has since been informed by [name deleted] that three machine guns and ammunition are still in [name

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[78] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Reflect Realistic Assessment", 21 October 1970.
[79] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "On 2 Nov COS Reviewed", 3 November 1970.
[80] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Headquarters Will Have Noted", 22 October 1970.

deleted]'s home and never given to anybody...Also [name deleted] still has three tear-gas canisters and three masks."[81]

A CIA review of its own actions, undertaken in 1973 states that "three submachine-guns were provided to three military officers who planned to use them in instigating an uprising by the Armed Forces. This program was conducted at the request of President Nixon with the understanding that is was not to become known to the State Department or other members of the 40 Committee."[82] This is all true, but were they given purposefully to assassinate Schneider? The CIA and White House did not want Schneider assassinated, as they understood that the impact of his death would benefit Allende more than it would his opposition by rallying "the army fully behind the flag of constitutionalism."[83] They trusted Valenzuela to carry out a kidnapping, but not Viaux, and to the last minute they attempted to keep Viaux from moving on his own.[84] Indeed, one message directly laughs at Viaux's exhortations that his group "did not like killing."[85] The CIA and Washington specifically did not want their weapons in the hands of the unstable and dangerous Viaux.

Did Kissinger actually order an end to contact with Viaux? The evidence in the cables and memoranda show that this is the most likely the case. Did Kissinger intend Track II to end, as he has testified? Probably, but that was at a time when the White House, 40 Committee, Track II staff and the CIA thought that Viaux was the only available option, and Kissinger ended the Viaux operation while urging that the pressure be kept on Allende "until such time as new marching orders are given."[86] What Kissinger wanted was Viaux stopped without an end to all domestic plotting, which might pay off in the long run. Essentially, he did not want to discourage any anti-Allende faction. Perhaps he need not have worried. What must be considered here is the fact that foreign army officers are not light switches, and can not simply be 'turned off.' The CIA had spread the message that they were interested in a coup against Schneider and "by now...all interested military parties know our position."[87] Whether this made a tremendous difference is a matter of dispute, and depends on how one views the autonomy of the Chilean officers who, even with American support for a coup apparently withdrawn, continued to plot. This was clear from the moment that the CIA went to 'switch off' the plotters: "Station false flag officer met with [Chilean] on [Del] October and attempted to dissuade Viaux group from undertaking a coup. The group, however, had met on 16 October and decided to attempt a coup on 21 or 22 October." This was not restricted to Viaux's group, for everywhere "Coup plotting continues to flourish."[88] The picture that develops out of these cables is one where the plug has been pulled from the wall, but the machine's lights keep blinking, to the bemusement of the inventor. A cable from Santiago indicates that there was no one from that station sharing "in planning of professionally executed military coup, let alone to second guess ringleaders." Indeed it was 'pointedly stated' that it was a Chilean matter from that time forward. On a wry note, the cable offers the observation that "this whole operation so unprofessional and insecure that, in [the] Chilean setting, it could stand a chance of succeeding." All that was required of the station was to assure the plotters that they would not be left 'high and dry' if their coup succeeded. "This we have done."[89] Kissinger, nonetheless, was most likely happy to hear that the opposition plotting against Allende was going ahead, even if the reports he heard offered little chance of success and may have only provided sketchy information. As for Track II, there are no memoranda or cables under the title "Track II" after the inauguration of Allende on November 3, 1970. The last mention of Track II in the CIA's documents is a report of the CIA's summary of Track II activity being delivered to the Attorney General on December 2, 1970.[90] An enigmatic cable date May 26, 1971, may hold the key. This one line message reads: "Project [deleted] termination approved effective 30 June 1971."[91] Could the deleted word be "Fubelt"? Regardless, Track II, being aimed at preventing Allende from being inaugurated President, effectively ended when that aim failed.

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[81] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Although Security Still Tight", 29 October 1970.
[82] Memorandum, "Overview Statements on CIA involvement in Chile in 1970," 20 February 1973.
[83] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Review of Significant Developments", 9 October 1970.
[84] Memorandum, "Track II", 19 October 1970.
[85] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Reports that meeting of Viaux Group", 16 October 1970.

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[86] 'Alleged Plots,' p. 242.

[87] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "Agree [deleted] Should Cease", 20 October 1970.

Of the new intelligence directing a coup after October 15, there is some evidence to indicate that it was not all reaching the executive level of the U.S. Government.[92] Many have doubted the testimony of Henry Kissinger and General Haig who said they knew nothing of the plots against Schneider. Karemessines, after all, stated in the same investigation that he had kept the White House abreast of all developments, and a cable from his office to Santiago demands details of coup plotting as "high level policy decisions in USG may become necessary...."[93] On October 19, a message from CIA HQ informs Santiago that "[we] feel we must be prepared advise higher echelons of nature of

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[88] Memorandum, "Track II", 19 October, 1970.

[89] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Station Making No Attempt", 19 October 1970.

[90] Memorandum, Helms to Kissinger, "Delivery of Chile Paper on Track II", 2 December 1970.

[91] Cable, "Project Termination Approval", 26 May 1971.

[92] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "Recognize it Much" 19 October, 1970. See also Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "realize this message", 18 October 1970.

[93] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "realize this message", 18 October 1970.

new military leaders and their programs in event coup attempted or even succeeds."[94] These documents are phrased in the conditional: 'prepared to advise,' not 'advising.' Furthermore, a cable the following day demonstrates that the CIA compartmentalized the knowledge of the anti-Schnieder plots. Released under the authority of William Broe (though the actual signature is deleted) the cable instructs the Santiago CT to keep the intelligence of the plots from an unnamed 'charge': "Do not REPEAT do not advise charge of impending coup possibility. Should it occur, COS [deletion] should appear surprised and stonewall any and all queries. 2. FYI: Understand that Korry departing for Santiago night 19 October. Para 1 instruction applies to ambassador as well as charge."[95] Queries from whom? Track II was already isolated from the other Chilean operations, so why would this have to be reiterated? This is clearly a specific limitation with regards to new activities. And, as the CIA station chiefs do not normally conduct their own press conferences, it would indicate the retention of intelligence from some other branch of the U.S. government. While there is nothing to specify the group to be kept in the dark, it does show that the knowledge of the new coup intelligence was not widely distributed even amongst the CIA. Regardless, most of this evidence merely indicates the very real confusion experienced in the Santiago CIA station during the period immediately surrounding the assassination of Schneider, as well as the CIA efforts to maintain operational security. Information, however, was still making it to CIA HQ and to Broe and Karamessines. Both of these men testified that they met with Kissinger during this period. Assuming the accuracy of this testimony to be fact, one may assume that Kissinger and the White House were most likely aware of the coup plotting, were happy to see it go ahead, but at the same time had no control over events. Furthermore, in light of the surprise that the CIA had over the assassination, the White House neither planned nor desired the *assassination* of Schneider.

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[94] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "Recognize it Much" 19 October, 1970.
[95] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "Do Not Advise Charge", 20 October, 1970.

Chapter 4

Watching History Unfold

The Coup Against Allende and Events to September 11, 1973

> A regime, an established order, is rarely overthrown by a revolutionary
> movement; usually a regime collapses of its own weakness and corruption
> and then a revolutionary movement enters among the ruins
> and takes over the powers that have become vacant.
> --Walter Lippmann to Charles de Gaulle

When Allende's government was overthrown on September 11, 1973, there was widespread belief that the Americans had been the crucial ingredient, and perhaps the actual instigators, of the coup. Authors such as William Robinson in his book *Promoting Polyarchy* and co-authors James Petras and Morris H. Morley in their book *The United States and Chile: Imperialism and the Overthrow of the Allende Government* espouse the belief that the U.S. "guided Pinochet and his cohorts in their takeover" or were responsible for "orchestrating the 1973 overthrow."[1] Many other authors contend that the U.S. 'destabilised' the Chilean government through an 'invisible blockade' which made the coup inevitable.[2] Very little has been done by the U.S. government to attempt to dispel this belief, which is still widespread today. Indeed, the main source for these books is the partisan and purposefully ambiguous Church Committee report (*Covert Action in Chile*), from which many authors have taken the few facts known about the

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[1] William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy* (Cambridge, 1996), pp 161-162. See also Robinson, "Capitalist Polyarchy in Latin America" in Cox, Ikenberry and Inoguchi, p. 315. Also: Petras and Morley, *The United States and Chile,* (New York, 1975), p. 82.

[2] Ibid. See also

1973 coup and merely insinuated or extrapolated American complicity and responsibility for Allende's ouster. One needs to look no further then Christopher Hitchens' "The Case Against Henry Kissinger II" to see the weakness of the argument. Hitchens uses a quotation of an American Naval Attaché—who stated that "Chile's coup d'état was nearly perfect"—to somehow demonstrate an un-referenced "thesaurus of hard information" proving American involvement in the coup.[3] Why was this quotation relevant? Does this observation of the smoothness of the coup somehow prove American complicity? The truth, backed by 'hard information' more solid then an out-of-context observation, points to a less sensational conclusion.

The simple fact is that the U.S. government had no significant input into the coup that killed Allende on September 11, 1973. The uncontrolled disasters of Track I and Track II had forced the Americans into a more circumspect appreciation of their ability to affect affairs in Chile. Moreover, the mistakes of 1970 facilitated a return to the relatively harmonious inter-departmental planning of the NSC, State Department, CIA and embassy staff, which in turn contributed to a more 'hands-off' approach to Allende. Beginning with another presidential directive, the behaviour of the U.S. government towards Chile after November 3, 1970 was less then bloody-minded. American CIA agents, with the full knowledge of their government, supported opposition parties and media outlets, attempted to sow dissent in the UP coalition, and gathered intelligence from the military. For its part, the U.S. government refused to extend further credit to a bankrupt Chilean government that had already defaulted on most of its loans. From Allende's election to his ouster in 1973, no branch of the U.S. government engaged in coup plotting with the Chilean armed forces or any other domestic political body. Not only were the Americans not involved in the coup, but they also so studiously avoided the appearance of promoting one that they failed, due to the subsequent lack of contacts with the military, to accurately predict its occurrence. Likewise, they were not clear on the nature of the new military government, nor had they had any contact with Augusto Pinochet, Chilean general and erstwhile Junta president.

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[3] Hitchens, Part II, March 2001, p. 49.

The lessons learned from the pre-inauguration period remained in the awareness of the U.S. Government and specifically the CIA throughout the three years of Allende's presidency. The evidence shows that the CIA operated well within the limits of their authority and firmly under the orders of the policy-making branches of the government from November 1970, to September 1973. Furthermore, one sees throughout this period an acknowledgement, by the U.S. government, of the limits of the power they were able to project in Chile and the limited facility they had to even predict coup attempts.

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Debates and Discussions

After Allende's inauguration on November 3, the U.S. government moved quickly to implement a new policy towards Chile. Little time was wasted taking the NSC discussion paper on Chile—NSSM 97—and adjusting it towards the new situation of a Marxist government in that country. An executive order on October 29 had the NSC revising NSSM 97 in anticipation of a meeting with the President scheduled for

November 5, 1970.[4] There were no major changes to the structure of the document—it still set out four options for American policy towards Chile. The new and improved NSSM 97, however, had changed the options to reflect the fact of an Allende government. The first two options could be reviewed as one, and essentially suggested that the U.S. to maintain an outwardly correct posture while refraining from initiatives that Allende could use to his advantage, while at the same time quietly limiting Allende's freedom of action.[5] Option 'C' called for the U.S. to act correctly in a diplomatic sense but make clear their opposition to the emergence of a communist government in South America and act outwardly to restrain Chilean diplomatic and political freedom.[6] The last option called for an openly hostile posture towards Chile. In order to appreciate the choice of these options requires one to understand the assessment the U.S. government had made of the Allende regime. The preamble to this options paper outlined their beliefs, and in it they (accurately) predicted the course that the Allende government would follow. Allende's goals, the paper stated, would be: "(a) To bring all significant economic activity under state operation.... (b) to gain control over the security and armed forces; and (c) to dominate public information media."[7] The initial plan of operations against Chile would be predicated on this estimate of Allende's actions. Overall, NSSM 97 is a remarkably lucid and well-argued assessment of the policy options for Chile and it served as the basis for the Presidential decision that was to follow it on November 5.

The discussion of NSSM 97 in the White House cabinet office was lively and direct. Present were all the major cabinet officers, as well as Kissinger, Vice President

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[4] Memorandum, Theodore Eliot to Kissinger, "NSC Meeting on Chile", 3 November 1970.
[5] Memorandum, Robert Hurwitch to Secretary of State, "NSC Meeting on Chile", 05 November 1970. It is the State Department's interpretation that options 'A' and 'B' were essentially identical.
[6] Memorandum, "Options Paper on Chile (NSSM 97)", 03 November 1970.
[7] Memorandum, "Options Paper on Chile (NSSM 97)", 03 November 1970.

Ford and President Nixon. The minutes of this meeting show the definite concern about Chile already broached before Allende's election. It is clear that there was a definite perception of threat to the national security of the U.S. For instance, there is a clear indication from the Vice-President of concern for the Communist-bloc reaction to the American stance in Chile and Latin America as a whole. Vice-President Ford points out that Allende in Chile forced the Americans to move more carefully in the sale of military equipment to, for instance, Argentina, "which could trigger massive support to Chile from the USSR and China."[8] This, in turn, might destabilize Latin America as a whole. Nixon was concerned about the implications of Allende on American interests in Latin America and the hemisphere in general. He opined that events in Chile, and the decisions being made in that very meeting, were going to be a watershed for American policy in Latin America.

> If Chile moves as we expect and is able to get away with it—our public posture is important here—it gives courage to others who are sitting on the fence in Latin America. Let's not think about what the really democratic countries in Latin America say: the game is in Brazil and Argentina. We could have moves under the surface which bring over time the same thing.[9]

These discussions of the threat to national interest and security led, as during Track II, to discussion of how to bring about Allende's downfall. Examining the options from NSSM 97, Kissinger noted that the four options listed "basically...amounts to two choices: (1) seek a *modus vivendi* with the Allende Government, or (2) adopt a posture of overt and frank hostility."[10] He said that the first choice offered a chance for Allende to consolidate his position and then operate against U.S. interests directly, while the second choice would strengthen Allende's appeal to anti-U.S. nationalism. Kissinger then went on to offer a third 'in-between' option: "adopt what is in fact a hostile posture but not from an overt stance, that is, to move in hostility from a low-key posture."[11] Nixon went on, integrating the themes of threat to American interests and the proper course to pursue.

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[8] Memorandum of Conversation, "NSC Meeting – Chile (NSSM 97)", 6 November 1970.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

> No impression should be permitted in Latin America that they can get away with this, that it's safe to go this way. All over the world it's too much the fashion to kick us around. We are not sensitive but our reactions must be coldly proper. We cannot fail to show our displeasure. We can't put up with 'Give Americans hell but pray they don't go away'...We must be proper on the surface with Allende, but otherwise we will be tough. He is not going to change; only self-interest will affect him.[12]

On November 9, 1970, the instructions of this cabinet discussion were incorporated into National Security Decision Memorandum 93 (NSDM 93) titled "Policy Towards Chile." It ordered that "within the context of a publicly cool and correct posture toward Chile" various courses of action were to be pursued. First was to ensure that the surrounding nations of Latin America were aware of U.S. opposition to a communist state on the continent. Furthermore, the U.S. was to exclude additional financing guarantees to U.S. firms operating in Chile, and to "bring maximum feasible influence to bear in international financial institutions to limit credit ...to Chile."[13] Additionally, NSDM 93 stressed that no new bilateral aid commitments were to be made with Chile, and those that existed should be delayed or reduced. Nothing is mentioned of any covert action plan to overthrow or assassinate Allende, though there is direction for the various agencies to "consider specific policy issues within the framework of this general posture."[14]

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] NSDM 93.
[14] Ibid.

The choice of this option was predicated on the belief, as the paper stated: "that (a) while the Allende government will vigorously pursue its Marxist goals, the economic and political difficulties facing it will place significant obstacles in its path...and (b) overt hostile actions initiated by the United States would work to [Allende's] political advantage."[15] Furthermore, as the State Department urged, there needed to be "a realistic assessment of U.S. capability to influence the situation there...U.S. overt and covert capabilities to force the course of events positively in our favour, short of the use of armed force, are marginal at best...and could be seriously counter-productive."[16] This was not an overly aggressive, thoughtless posture, but rather one designed to maximize American input on the fate of their economic assets and political position in the region.

An accurate summation of what the American's believed they could achieve in Chile is made in a subsequent NSC options paper later in the same month. "Although events in Chile will be determined principally by internal Chilean forces and therefore US influence can have only a marginal effect, the skilful exercise of our influence could be an important factor in complicating Allende's task..."[17] Furthermore, many in the U.S. government did not view the President's choice of option 'C,' and the CIA's subsequent action plan, to be final. "The program appears in general to be well-conceived," noted Charles Meyer, "but raises certain questions that should be kept under continuing review. The effect of in inter-action between the various elements of the proposed program is particularly important."[18] Unlike the period of Track II, the tone was set for meaningful inter-agency cooperation on Chile.

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[15] Memorandum, "Options Paper on Chile (NSSM 97)", 03 November 1970

[16] Memorandum, Hurtwitch to Secretary of State, "NSC Meeting on Chile", 5 November 1970.

[17] Memorandum, "Options Paper for NSC: Chile", 31 November 1970.

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A New Mandate

Before dealing with the development of the CIA's operations plans in Chile, it is helpful to first analyse the State Department's role as outlined in NSDM 93, namely that of financial action against Allende's government. With NSDM 93, the U.S. government had decided to throw its economic weight against Allende. There has been much made of this fact and the U.S. has been fiercely attacked for this economic policy, commonly viewed as economic imperialism.[19] Regardless, not every aspect of the American economic policy towards Allende was aimed at his ouster. The reason for this is clear: the Americans maintained large economic interests in Chile and sought favourable concessions out of the UP government for their protection. As far as the State Department was concerned, the best US-Chilean relations were not predatory, but rather ones that saw the UP-government remaining within the strictures of international financial and banking law. A cable from the Santiago Embassy to the State Department with regard to debt payments (named after the chief US negotiator) outlines this belief.

> We should not assume that Allende's realization of his dependence on the West means that there is no limit to our ability to push GOC toward more reasonable and forthcoming positions...Our pressures for concessions will be effective only as long as GOC believes there is a chance for at least marginally beneficial relations with USG. Fact we have not closed off

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[18] Memorandum, Charles Meyer to Ambassador Johnson, "Covert Action Program for Chile", 18 November 1970.
[19] Kolko, p. 217.

> that hope and have kept relations in low key correctness probably contributed to decision to pay Braden instalment.[20]

Very little needs to be written here about the economic 'destabilization' of the Allende government, as this subject has been adequately covered in several articles on the subject of U.S. economic pressure.[21] Likewise, there has been extensive testimony by both the World Bank and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, as well as other private banks, to various U.S. legislative bodies about American economic 'destabilization' in Chile.[22] The Church Committee report, for its part, alleges that the collapse of the Chilean economy was caused entirely by U.S. government.[23]

The basic question is this: what had a greater effect, U.S. government policy or Chile's credit rating? Many of the major banks continued their credits to Chile until that country declared a unilateral moratorium on debt payments at the end of 1971.[24] Furthermore, many banks cut off service to Chile after that state nationalized their Chilean branches without compensation. To make matters worse for Chile, the price of copper dropped by 23% in 1971 affecting the ability to import goods, while at the same time domestic food production dropped necessitating increased imports of foodstuffs.[25] Where American credit dried up, however, Allende's Chile actually received *more* credits from Latin America, Australia, Canada, Japan, Europe and the Eastern block. Indeed, by

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[20] Cable, Santiago to Secretary of State (00953), 28 February 1972.

[21] See Ann Helwege "Three Socialist Experiences in Latin America: Surviving U.S. Economic Pressure" in *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1989. See also: Morris Morley and Steven Smith "Imperial Reach: U.S. Policy and the CIA in Chile" in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 105, 1990.

[22] World Bank, "Chile and The World Bank" in *Inter-American Economic Affairs*, Vol. XXX, No. 2, 1976. See also IBRD "Notes Relating to Chile's Creditworthiness during the Administration of Presidents Allende and Pinochet", in *Inter-American Economic Affairs*, Vol. XXXI, No. 2, 1977. These are published versions of text submitted to separate hearings of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance.

[23] *Covert Action in Chile*, p. 29

[24] Helwege, p. 220.

[25] Goldberg, p. 109.

1973 Chile had more available credits, with $574 million, then when Allende came to power ($310 million).[26] The UP was discouraged to find, however, that much of this credit was tied to purchases in the creditor countries, and unfortunately there was no economically viable substitute for U.S. machinery, replacement parts and technology. Much of the credits from the Eastern Block subsequently went unused.[27] Furthermore, many of the European creditors, like the U.S., withdrew their credits once the UP government set out to nationalize their Chilean business ventures.[28]

Simply, there is nothing in the U.S. economic behaviour affecting Chile that was not covered by American law. The U.S. 'Hickenlooper Amendment' stipulates that any state that nationalizes American property without a fair process of compensation is no longer eligible for US government aid. Even under the presidency of Juan Velasco Alvarado of Peru the amendment was invoked, though the State Department softened the blow in favour of this pro-American 'reformist' government.[29] Chile, on the other hand, not only expropriated American assets without compensation but also based their entire campaign on the deconstruction of foreign investment in Chile. Allende himself wrote: "The central objective of the UP is to replace the present economic structure and to end the power of monopoly capitalism...in order to begin the construction of socialism."[30] As taxing as the Chilean debt payment schedule was, the decision to stop repayments could only have served to assure the reduction of Chile's private-sector credit rating. As one set of authors has stated: "Surely, the UP, given its ideology, could not have been surprised that the Nixon administration was determined to use its economic strength to cut off bilateral and multilateral aid."[31] One is presented with a question that cuts to the core of the modern world economic system. Can the U.S. be criticised for not continuing loans to a nation that not only defaulted on existing loans, but also actively and publicly opposed American involvement in their economy? Ultimately, it may not have mattered. One particularly detailed account of Allende's economic policies, by economist Ann Helwege, came to the following conclusion:

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[26] Nogee and Sloan, p. 349.
[27] *The United States and Chile* (Testimony of Crimmins), p. 69.
[28] Davis, pp. 125-127.
[29] Lineberry, p. 193.
[30] Allende, p. 37.

> ...the economic roots of Allende's problems also lay in the impossibility of a general increase in consumption without sustained copper earnings and commercial lending. Given the inherent instability of Allende's economic agenda, [American] sanctions added an important destabilizing element. Intervention through CIA covert operations, which hurt US relations elsewhere in Latin America, was probably unnecessary to secure Allende's demise.[32]

Though the final sentence overestimates the U.S. complicity in the coup, the point is an important one in light of the popular perception of American efforts. Indeed, Helwege even overstates the level of American sanctions, for the U.S. continued, through 1970-1973, to disburse bilateral loans already agreed upon, and U.S. private banks even continued to extend some credit to Chile.[33] Likewise, the U.S. never imposed an embargo of spare parts or equipment to Chile, and never prevented the shipping companies from carrying them.[34] The simple fact is that under the Allende government the economic situation deteriorated so dramatically that no Chilean company (of which there were fewer and fewer as Allende nationalized) could afford further loans to finance imports. As Mark Falcoff stated, the Chilean economy was so linked to that of the U.S. that the withdrawal of support on any level was bound to have a significant impact.

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[31] Nogee and Sloan, p. 348.

[32] Helwege, p. 222

[33] Vicuña, ed. , *The Balanced View*, pp 142-145. This is a table of IMF, IDB, and IBRD loans and decisions concerining Chile from 1971 through to 1974.

[34] Falcoff, p. 229.

Having failed to prevent the triumph of Marxism in Chile at the cost of billions in aid and lost U.S. investments, there is little reason to justify why the U.S. "should have ratified its error by throwing good money after bad."[35]

Given this information on U.S. government and private lending, some commentators have pointed out continued U.S. military aid to the Chilean military throughout Allende's presidency as a violation by the U.S. of their own policies.[36] Likewise, it is possible to assert that the continuation of the Military Assistance Program (MAP) and Foreign Military Sales (FMS) was a policy meant to promote military intervention by the Chilean Armed Forces.[37] A review of the cable and memorandum traffic about MAP casts some doubt on these assertions.

MAP was one of the first topics broached by the Nixon administration subsequent to Allende's victory at the polls. In the initial frenzy after Allende's plurality, it was tentatively decided to cancel MAP to Chile in order to prompt the Chilean Army to act against Allende.[38] For the very reason of the transparency of this move, it was decided that "such action by the U.S....would probably become known publicly and interpreted by many both in and out of Chile as overt U.S. pressure upon the Chilean military to take the political situation into their own hands,"[39] and the decision was consequently reversed. But the public image was only part of the problem. Politically, the U.S. was dealing with a Marxist government, but the military, the branch of the Chilean government that could pose a threat to American national security, was still anti-communist and American-oriented. Accordingly: "the elimination of grant military aid, the low limits of MAP sales and the slashing of training funds...could only lead to the elimination of meaningful U.S. influence on the military."[40] Likewise, Viron Vaky wrote to Kissinger asking him to continue MAP, for "if we continue to suspend military aid it will appear we are punishing the military which is the last group in Chile we ought to punish."[41] At the urging of the relatively dovish Ambassador Korry, it was decided to maintain MAP and associated military aid regardless of Allende's inauguration. After the Schneider assassination, however, the Ambassador was ordered to hold off telling the Chilean army about the restoration of MAP, as "it could be construed as [a] bonus for a job well done."[42] The U.S. remained very aware of the 'optics' of arms sales to a country where American interests were so publicly challenged.

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[35] Ibid, p. 240.

[36] Paul E. Sigmund, "The 'Invisible Blockade' and the Overthrow of Allende" in Vicuña, ed. *The Balanced View*, p. 118. This sumarises the ciriticism of U.S. military aid to Chile.

[37] *Covert Action in Chile*, pp. 41-42.

[38] Cable, Kissinger and Johnson to Ambassador Korry, "Highest Levels Here", 07 October 1970.

[39] Memorandum, Johnson and Meyer to Korry, 23 September 1970.

The change in U.S. posture after the inauguration inevitably affected MAP and FMS. On November 6, during the NSDM 93 planning process, the Santiago station urged CIA HQ to support continued MAP sales and training. The cable stated:

> Now more than ever, [the] Chilean army needs [the] friendly open hand of U.S.. The Army has U.S. equipment and doctrine. Supply system U.S. oriented. [the Chilean] Army now feels it is alone without friends except for U.S....If U.S. turns its back, Chilean Army will be 'forced' to look elsewhere which it does not want to do.[43]

The U.S. government seems to have followed this advice. Adhering to NSDM-93, the U.S. would continue to maintain the pre-election status of the US Military Group (milgroup) of advisors in Chile, would continue MAP, and would not raise the topic of military support with the Allende government unless they did. Furthermore, it was decided that the sale of tanks, air transports and fighter jets to Chile would be delayed as long as possible but that no announcement would be made that these items would be embargoed.[44] This was a cautious first step in continued military support.

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[40] Cable, Korry to Under Secretary Johnson, 16 September 1970.
[41] Memorandum, Vaky to Kissnger, "Chile", 18 October 1970.
[42] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Strongly Urge that U.S.G", 22 October 1970.
[43] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "There is more confidence", 06 November 1970.

Over the course of the subsequent three years, the U.S. extended over $30 million in credits for the purchase of military equipment, including $5 million in 1971, $10 million in 1972 and $12.4 million in 1973.[45] These credits were furnished after "agreement in principle with the GOC on the terms of the rescheduling of the amounts due..." and were integrated into the U.S. debt negotiations with Chile.[46] An extensive 'action memorandum' of February 1973 goes to some length to justify these FMS credits to Chile:

> The current Chilean Commanders-in-Chief and their staffs have so far successfully maintained the Chilean military's crucial non-partisan stance and its resistance to the governing leftist coalition's efforts to shift their source of military supplies and doctrinal orientation away from the U.S. The Chilean military leaders have resisted offers of Soviet military credits—reportedly up to $300 million...—and other forms of assistance including training....[47]

When reviewing the course of MAP in Chile, one sees not an attempt by the U.S. to use MAP as a tool to provoke a coup, but rather as a delicate programme which might keep the Chilean military from becoming a Soviet client. For the latter to happen would mean an intolerable Soviet encroachment into the American sphere and so pose a direct threat to American national security in the hemisphere.

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[44] Cable, Secretary of State to US Embassy Santiago, "MilGroup and Military Equipment for Chile", 03 December 1970.

[45] Memorandum, "Our Public Response to Congressional Inquiries" [unclassified], 22 Feb 1973. The Church Committee report provides slightly different figures: $5.7 million for 1971; $12.3 million for 1972; and, $15 million for 1973. See *Covert Action in Chile*, p. 39.

[46] Memorandum, "Our Public Response to Congressional Inquiries" [unclassified], 22 Feb 1973.

[47] Memorandum, Charles Meyer to Curtis Tarr, "FMS Credits for Chile", 22 February 1973.

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The CIA in Action

With a new mandate from NSDM 93, the CIA set about, in early November of 1970, to produce a covert action plan for implementation in Chile. By November 17, the CIA had submitted for approval its 'covert action program for Chile'. Keyed to NSDM 93, the program was "directed at the Allende government, the Chilean Armed Forces, the non-Marxist opposition, the Chilean public....in an effort to maximize pressure on the Allende government to prevent its consolidation and to limit its ability to implement policies contrary to U.S. and hemispheric interests."[48] The first aspect of the programme described by the document is to take "political action to divide and weaken the Allende coalition....to create splits within and between coalition parties."[49] Also detailed in the document is the plan to provide financial support to the opposition parties, the PDC and the PN. Concurrent with this political party funding was the support for opposition media outlets "which can speak out against the Allende government."[50] Tucked into the text between these options was the topic 'The Armed Forces.' Though heavily excised, the first paragraph of the section does not call for the assassination or a coup against Allende. Simply, it states that "we are maintaining and where possible enlarging our contacts in the military" and that "we continue to provide intelligence [to key military officials] such as the background of the Cuban intelligence personnel who are arriving in Chile...."[51] The role stated here is that of intelligence gathering and dissemination.

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[48] Memorandum, "Covert Action Program for Chile", 17 November 1970.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.

The CIA country-team still sought, perhaps due to residual impressions from the Track II period, to produce a coup in Chile. This was not in the plan for the post-inauguration period, however, and this is made clear in a series of cables exchanged in November of 1971. A cable of November 12, discusses the CIA Chief-of-Station's plans to gather intelligence on coup plotting within Chile. The three pages of the memo discuss the mechanics of making relations with coup plotters, learning of their plans, and perhaps influencing them by giving advice or suggesting techniques they had not considered. While the COS states that the CIA should not lead or participate in any of these coups, he concludes that the CIA's mission was to "work consciously and deliberately in the direction of a coup" with fresh contacts in the Chilean military.[52]

The Chief of the Western Hemisphere division of the CIA responded to this cable with absolute clarity: "We cannot accept your conclusion.... nor can we authorize you to 'talk frankly about the mechanics of a coup' with key commanders, because the implications of that amount to the same." Clearly, the COS had overestimated the belligerency of the USG in its posture towards Allende. The Chief of Western Hemisphere Division set him straight.

> The essential fact which must be kept in mind by all officers connected with the [deleted] program is that we do not have any authority to state, or even to imply, that [USG] favours a coup as a solution to the Chilean dilemma. If and when Station reporting indicates a favorable political atmosphere and a serious military intent to take action against the Allende government, it will become the responsibility of other [USG] authorities to use this intelligence in reaching a policy decision. [deleted. USG?] might or might not at that time request such a decision from [deleted. CIA?]. We just cannot say at this stage or seek advance advice on the basis of hypothesis. Policy does not work that way...in sum, stay with history as it unfolds, don't make it.[53]

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[52] Cable, Chief of Sation Santiago to Chief of Western Hemisphere Division, 12 November 1971.
[53] Cable, C/WHD to COS Santiago, 1 December 1971.

The CIA was going to operate strictly within the bounds of the inter-departmental framework of covert operations, and this quotation puts to rest the Church committee assertion, when referring to these same cables, that the CIA "realised that the US government's desire to be in clandestine contact with military plotters...might well imply U.S. support for their future plans" and continued these contacts regardless.[54] It is amply clear that the CIA, in active consultation with the other interested branches of government, was expressly staying away from any coup plotting. Responding to a proposal from the Santiago Station in October of 1972, CIA HQ said:

> While HQs prepared consider any specific detailed proposal, even if we believe it has merit would still have to consult with other interested agencies and secure their concurrence. FYI only, our present reading of other agency thinking is that any proposition which smacks of adventurism will be most difficult to sell.[55]

One particular incident in June of 1973 demonstrates that the CIA did not cross the boundary from intelligence gathering to coup plotting, due perhaps to the fractured nature of the conspiring that was ongoing in the Chilean military. By 1973, inflation, breakdown of the UP coalition and massive civic unrest of a strike by truckers and miners markedly increased the anti-Allende sentiment in Chile. The greatest symptom of this tension, as manifested within the military, was an attempted coup by low-level army officers on June 29, 1973. On this day, junior officers led the 2nd Armoured Battalion as it surrounded *La Moneda*, the Presidential palace in the centre of Santiago. The battalion attempted the revolt in the apparent hope that the rest of the military and the police would join. Instead, the bulk of the armed services came to the defence of the government.[56]

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[54] *Covert Action in Chile*, p. 37.

[55] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "While HQs Prepared", 23 October 1972.

[56] Memorandum, "CIA Bulletin", 30 June 1973.

Ironically, it was the *Tacnazo* regiment that succeeded, after only three hours, in putting down the rebellion.

There is no evidence that the U.S. had advance knowledge of this failed coup attempt. Indeed, a CIA report of the same day states: "At this time there is no available information to indicate that the attack by the Armoured Regiment on the presidential palace was more than an isolated and uncoordinated effort by that unit."[57] Another document, designed to answer potential White House questions about CIA involvement in the abortive coup, confirms that the CIA had nothing to do with the events of June 29. The first question, "did the Agency play any role whatever in supporting or encouraging the coup" is answered with a terse "none."[58] While admitting that the CIA had been in contact with some coup plotters, they affirmed that they were not sure if anyone in the June 29 events was connected with them. Furthermore, the CIA document says that they did nothing to support or encourage the attempted coup, and when their contact asked for help in developing arrest lists or names of potential co-conspirators, the CIA responded by telling the Chilean officer "...that neither the Agency nor the U.S. Government was stimulating, encouraging or favoring a coup and that no information could be given to him."[59] The UP press accused the US government of sponsoring the attempted coup and went so far as to name Mr. Keith Wheelock as the CIA agent charged with fomenting this anti-Allende action through a Chilean intermediary, Manuel Fuentes, a member of the *Patria y Libertad*. The internal CIA discussion over this accusation discovered the following information: "Wheelock left Chile in late 1969. He had contact with

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[57] Memorandum, Intelligence Report, "as of 1040 Hours", 29 June 1973.
[58] Memorandum, "Questions Which May Be Raised Concerning Chile", 'Circa' July 1973 (listed as 1 July 73 in State Department pages)
[59] Ibid.

Fuentes...and passed him onto another embassy contact...but apparently dropped him as a contact in April 1970 when Fuentes became insistent in asking for USG financial support for anti-Allende purposes."[60] The U.S. had had nothing to do with the June 29 revolt. In its own review, the CIA concluded that the revolt, "an almost futile gesture of frustration by the action-oriented military officers...was doomed to failure."[61] So confusing was this action to the CIA that their assessment of its implications were that it had fostered a greater degree of unpredictability and instability in an already chaotic environment. The CIA, in this case, did not approve of chaos: it made events tricky to forecast and made the results of their work more difficult to predict.[62]

If from 1971 onwards it was clear that the CIA were forbidden from actively or tacitly promoting a coup, what activities did they pursue in Chile? The main focus of American activities remained on the two items mentioned in the initial plan of January 9, 1971, namely efforts to support the Chilean opposition and its media, and to encourage dissention in the UP coalition.[63] In his memoirs, Kissinger stated: "we agreed with our Democratic predecessors that groups standing for democratic values needed our help against those who openly threatened them."[64] While perhaps the decision to support these parties was not drafted with such lofty language or unpartisan goals, the intent was similar. Through poor organization and lack of private sector funding (made very difficult due to UP control of banking and their nationalization of many companies), the main centrist and rightist parties were having difficulty mounting an effective opposition to the UP.[65] Likewise, there was a threat that the UP would use the PDC's leadership review in early 1971 to attempt to gain control of the PDC by supporting the Party's left wing.[66] The central aim of this CIA effort, however, was "to keep the current political set in Chile from becoming irreversible."[67] To achieve this aim, the CIA would assist the opposition parties, almost entirely by funding, in order that they might maintain their domination of the Congress, the main obstacle to Allende's goal of a fully Marxist economy and government. At best, they hoped the opposition might achieve a two-thirds majority necessary in the Senate to impeach Allende.[68] There would be no attempt to rig elections, bribe candidates, or conduct any other 'black' operation to ensure the success of these parties; merely the passage of funds.[69] Ambassador Korry approved of this limited plan with some reluctance.[70]

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[60] Cable, American Embassy Santiago to Secretary of State, "UP Press ties CIA to Coup Attempt", 12 July 1973.

[61] Memorandum, "Situation Report on Uprising by Military Unit", 25 July 1973.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Following is Covert Action Proposal", 09 January 1971.

[64] Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p. 377.

Once the U.S. Government had approved of this policy the CIA set out—after a short period of assuring themselves of the secrecy and security of their plan[71]—to move very large sums of money to the PDC and PN. The first attempt at this programme was made in time for the Chilean municipal elections of April 1971, on the basis that those elections "will be viewed as a plebiscite for the UP."[72] The 40 Committee, on January 28, 1971, approved $1,240,000 "to cover ongoing administrative support to bolster Party infrastructure ."[73] Additionally, the money was to be used to purchase radio stations and newspapers to assist in publicizing the efforts of the party.[74] Subsequent funds were voted to the PDC and PN for the Congressional elections, by-elections and ad-hoc needs as requested. In total, $2.6 million was spent supporting the Christian Democrats, National Party, and Radical Party splinters. Two thirds of this went to finance opposition campaigns in the 1972 by-elections and the congressional elections of March 1973.[75] Unlike CIA campaign efforts during the presidential election, no one criticised the direct support of non-UP parties.

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[65] Memorandum, Talking Paper, 07 December 1970. See also Memorandum, "ARA/CIA Meeting 30 May 73", 31 May 1973.
[66] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "Resume of Country Director and INR Comments", 13 December 1970
[67] Memorandum, "ARA/CIA Meeting 30 May 73", 31 May 1973.
[68] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "It is station's View", 08 February 1973.
[69] Cable, "In Ref Station Forwarded", 09 Jan 1971.
[70] Ibid
[71] Memorandum, Arnold Nachmanoff to Kissinger, "Proposals for Covert Support of Chilean Opposition", 28 January 1971.
[72] Ibid

A further sum, under a separate appropriation, went to subsidise the main opposition paper, *El Mercurio*, Chile's largest and most important newspaper.[76] As the major conservative paper and media crusader against Allende, it was one of his first targets. The initial UP effort took the form of attempted labour disputes to seize editorial control, followed by a forced increase in wages with a freeze on prices.[77] In October 1971, the UP government tried to seize effective control over *Papelera*, the paper and pulp company that had a monopoly over the production of newsprint, in the hope of driving *El Mercurio*'s prices up intolerably. The Americans perceived all of this as a major threat to freedom of the press by forcing the newspaper into UP control.[78] Even then, a discussion paper in the NSC had cast doubt on the wisdom or effectiveness of supporting *El Mercurio*. "I reluctantly conclude that we should go along with this,"[79] argued one NSC functionary. According to the Church Committee Report, a total of $1.7 million was given to *El Mercurio* in order to keep the paper afloat.[80]

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[73] Memorandum, for Deputy Director of Plans, "Request for Approval of Project", 12 February 1971.
[74] Davis, p. 21.
[75] *Covert Action in Chile*, p.60
[76] See Jerry W. Knudson, "Allende to Pinochet: Crucible of the Chilean Press 1970-1984," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, Vol 6, 1987, for a review of the history and impact of *El Mercurio*, the world's oldest Spanish language newspaper.
[77] Davis, p. 308.
[78] Memorandum, John Crimmins to the Under Secretary, "Chilean Media under a Marxist Regime", 23 December 1970. See also Faundez, p. 218.

Meanwhile, the CIA worked to implement the second aspect of the political action programme: creating dissent within the UP coalition. Noting severe friction between the Communists (PCCh) and Socialists (PS)—the two main parties in the UP—the CIA hoped to "continue programs designed to exacerbate mutual suspicions and frictions between PCCh/PS and PCCh/MIR, including both propaganda as well as [deleted] attribution pieces...."[81] The CIA hoped that the Radical Party of the left (PIR), then part of the governing UP coalition, might act as a 'dissident element' within the UP and could be used "to heighten tensions within the government coalition."[82] Though the methods they used to create this split are deleted from the files (as is most information dealing with 'tradecraft'), it is clear that the plan succeeded. In April of 1972 the PIR left the UP coalition to work with the opposition. Though they were only a small party, and the loss of their seats did not adversely affect the power of the UP, it was a definite blow to the morale of the government and some proof to the U.S. that their covert aid was working. Following their split from the UP, the PIR began to receive support funds along the same model as the Christian Democrats and National Party.[83]

The success of this support, despite such clear successes as the PIR split, was debated by the differing agencies and individuals involved. The CIA and some parts of the State Department felt the support was a success throughout the full period of the programme.[84] In 1972, the CIA issued a report stating that the funding helped the opposition to "maintain its vigor". The report went on to state that:

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[79] Memorandum, Jorden to Kissinger, "40 Committee Meeting – Chile", 10 April 1972.

[80] *Covert Action in Chile*, p. 60.

[81] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "On Morning 14 Dec", 19 December 1970.

[82] Memorandum, William McAfee to the Under Secretary, "Status of Covert Support", 1 February 1972.

[83] Memorandum, Charles Meyer to Ambassador Johnson, "Status Report on Covert Assistance to Chilean Opposition", 5 July 1972.

> ...the continued vitality of the congressional and popular opposition to the UP testifies to the effectiveness with which the three parties have maintained their independence and their appeal. While the precise extent to which our assistance has contributed to this situation is of course unknowable, it seems clear that it has helped.[85]

However, after the abortive coup of June 29, 1973, the CIA became sceptical of continuing the support for the opposition parties. The Santiago station based their opinion against this support on political reality. First of all, the military had remained loyal to the government through the attempted coup, and this had not done anything to encourage the political opposition.[86] Furthermore, the opposition did not make any gains in the March Congressional elections (though they had not lost ground) and there was a poor outlook for gains in future elections. Even if the opposition did win, it was believed that a Frei presidency would not be that beneficial to the U.S. As the CIA COS reported:

> We do not know what may happen during the next few months: it is just possible that heightened political tensions could lead to a dramatic breakdown in public order which would prompt the military to act. If our objective is still to overthrow Allende then we should be prepared to take advantage of these circumstances and to assist the private sector...but if the US government is not prepared to take the risks involved in such action (and such a refusal seems amply justified by armed forces support of Allende on 29 June) then the continuance of large-scale financial assistance to the political parties will not be productive.[87]

The dubious productivity of supporting the official political parties prompted some in the CIA and State department to consider support for various groups in the private sector.

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[84] Memorandum, William McAfee to the Under Secretary, "Status of Covert Support", 1 February 1972.

[85] Memorandum, Charles Meyer to Under Secretary Johnson, "Sitrep on Covert Assistance to Chilean Opposition", 13 April 1972.

[86] Memorandum, Unknown (Santiago COS?) to C/WHD, "Chile: What Now", 30 June 1973.

[87] Ibid.

This included labour organizations, professional unions, and private-interests groups whose sympathies were with the opposition. Funding for these groups was authorised on a trial basis in September of 1972, as was "designed fundamentally to strengthen the ability of these organizations...to contribute to the political strength of the opposition."[88] As briefed to Ambassador Johnson, a significant side benefit to this support included "an improvement in the ability of these organizations to resist the government drive to weaken further the private sector, and the maintenance of private business, industry, and agriculture as a broad source of funds for the opposition political parties."[89] As it turned out, most of this funding went towards 'get out the vote' campaigns in support of the opposition.[90]

As the political instability in Chile grew in 1973, the State Department once again raised the proposition of supporting the private sector, noting the CIA's observation that "the private sector is becoming desperate."[91] There was significant unwillingness for such support, however, and it was reported that "Ambassador Davis and Assistant Secretary Kubisch are reluctant to authorize support to the private sector because this sector is working to promote military intervention."[92] The 40 Committee approved the proposal for funding for the private sector, in the last half of August, but made all disbursements contingent on "the Ambassador's approval."[93] Amongst other authors, Gabriel Kolko has suggested that these funds were used in "generously aiding the militant opposition."[94] Luis Vitale quote a contemporary source who stated "se puede afirmar categóricamente que las huelgas...fueron financiadas por la CIA."[95] CIA documents refute this allegation. As CIA director William Colby noted in a report to Kissinger a week after the coup, the short time-span and reluctance of the Ambassador prevented the provision of this support to any civilian organisation:

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[88] Memorandum, Charles Meyer to Ambassador Johnson, "Covert Aid to Chilean Private Sector", 15 September 1972.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Cable, CIA HQ to Santiago Station, "Request Approval on Text", 21 February 1973.
[91] Memorandum, "Covert Action Options for Chile", 31 March 1973.
[92] Memorandum, Unknown (Santiago COS?) to C/WHD, "Chile: What Now", 30 June 1973.
[93] Cable, DCIA to Santiago Station, "Have Just Been Advised", 21 August 1973.
[94] Kolko, p. 221.

> ...no support was provided to the private sector, whose initiative in launching and maintaining a series of crippling strikes was instrumental in provoking the military coup of 11 September 1973. Thus, while the Agency was instrumental in enabling opposition parties and media to survive and to maintain their dynamic resistance to the Allende regime, the CIA played no direct role in the events which led to the establishment of the new military government.[96]

After much discussion, and despite large amounts of funds being approved, no money of any significance was passed to the component organizations of the Chilean private sector.

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Civil Unrest

The American operations and policies outlined above did not, of course, occur in a vacuum. While the U.S. government and its agencies prepared and executed their plans for covert operations in Chile, conditions there began to unfold as predicted by many in the U.S. If one is to summarise the domestic problems of Allende's government, it is easiest to say that due to infighting and incoherency in the UP coalition, rudderless economic policy, a drop in copper prices and agricultural production, massive inflation, and a vigourous opposition, Chile's social fabric and its economy disintegrated almost simultaneously. By 1973, for instance, inflation was running at 300%, and was projected to hit 400%.[97] These symptoms of economic collapse clearly affected the Chilean population, and especially the middle class. By mid-1972 there began in Chile a series of violent and protracted strikes that slowly destabilized the UP government. The first of these began on August 21, led by the nation's independent shopkeepers.[98] Several weeks of wildcat strikes and street violence followed, going on until the police closed off downtown Santiago after a two-day running street fight between the youth arms of the rival political parties. While this violence was ended by efficient *Carabinero* action, they were unable to control subsequent events.[99] Sparked by a government initiative to nationalize transport in the Southern Provinces, the nation's truckers (mostly small owners of two or three trucks) went on strike beginning October 9, 1972. A wide range of professional and small labour unions soon joined the truckers. The strike went on for three weeks, ending on November 5, and was estimated to have cost Chile as much as $200 million in lost production. More importantly, it forced Allende's cabinet to resign and brought military officers into the cabinet on November 2, 1972. These strikes, however, were taken only as a last resort by a Chilean population that was generally quite tolerant of its politicians, for as one Chilean commentator has commented "after only twelve months in office and despite its electoral success, the UP was weak and divided...the government had virtually lost its capacity for taking decisions."[100] There were increasing indications of Cuban security`agents in the country, and some positive intelligence on Chilean support for the insurgency in Bolivia.[101] Internally, the CIA had collected ample evidence of large 'street brigades' of pro-UP youth armed with Cuban weapons, and knew of right-wing groups doing the same.[102] Political deterioration mirrored the deterioration in internal security: another set of strikes began in late July of 1973, this time encompassing groups from as diverse backgrounds as engineers and doctors to peasant and labour groups.[103] Matters became so unstable in Chile that on August 9, Allende formed his second emergency military cabinet, bringing the C-in-Cs of the four services into key portfolios. Generals and Ministers were resigning as fast as they could be brought into government. Street violence was an everyday fact.[104] As CIA director William Colby reported to the White House, it was "increasingly apparent that three years of political polarization had strained the fabric of Chilean society to the breaking point."[105] Allende was facing a grave situation.

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[95] Vitale, p. 222. Translated as "I can state categorically that the strikes...were financed by the CIA."

[96] Memorandum, William Colby to Kissinger, "CIA's Covert Action Programme Chile", 13 September 1973.

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[97] Pierre Kalfon, p. 198.
[98] Faundez, p. 237.
[99] Cable, US Embassy Santiago to Secretary of State, "Finale if Aug 21 Violence", 22 August 1973.
[100] Faundez, p. 222.
[101] Memorandum, Intelligence Report, "The Presidential Security Guard", 1 Nov 1971.

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The Coup

The end to the Allende government began on August 23, 1973, when General Carlos Prats, C-in-C of the Army, resigned from Allende's Military Cabinet. A Defence Information Agency (DIA) report written after the coup reported this as the most important contributing factor to the success of the coup "because [it] effectively freed Army plotters to join with the other two services and the Carabineros."[106] Ignited by a crisis in the Naval chain-of-command, coup plotting rapidly spread through all the services, achieving on September 9, 1973 the inter-service coordination that had been lacking in previous coup plots or attempts. On the morning of September 11, all services moved to secure the main population centres in Chile. Before noon *La Moneda* was surrounded by tanks and strafed by attack jets. By the two in the afternoon Allende was dead—either by murder or by suicide[107]—and the Junta was in charge of Chile. The question that has driven critics since is: what did the U.S. know or contribute to the coup that killed Allende?

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[102] Memorandum, "CIA Bulletin", 30 June 1973. See Also Memorandum, Intelligence Report, "During the Second Week of August", 25 August 1973.

[103] Cable, Santiago Station to CWH/D, "Strike in Chile", 22 August 1973.

[104] Davis, Chapter 8 *in passim*.

[105] Memorandum, Colby to Kissinger, "CIA's Covert Action Program", 19 September 1973.

[106] Department of Defense Intelligence Information Report, "Events leading up to the 11 September Military Coup", 29 October 1973.

As matters grew more serious for the Allende government by the end of 1972, representatives of the different American agencies gathered to discuss what the U.S. reaction would be if they were asked to support a coup. One of the first points raised, as noted in the minutes of the meeting, is that "it is unlikely that the United States will be asked to help in preparing or delivering a coup." Discussing this at length, the minutes indicate that U.S. 'positive involvement' in a coup would have only the barest support within the U.S. and would not suit the international image the nation wished to project at the time. Moreover, "it would at most have only marginal influence on the course of events."[108] The memo goes on to discuss the nature of the requests they might receive, the nature of the coups potentially plotted, and sums up the core problem succinctly.

> On the basis of presently available evidence it would…seem that we would be well advised to hold ourselves back from specific commitments to Chileans who seek assurances on our attitude toward a new regime produced by a coup. If such commitments were to contribute to a decision to attempt a coup they would be too dangerous to give; if they would not contribute to such a decision they would be superfluous.[109]

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[107] For a further discussion, see Ignacio Gonzalez Camus, *El Dia En Que Murio Allende* (Santiago, 1988).
[108] Memorandum for the Record, "U.S. Reaction to Possible Approach by Chilean Coup Plotters", 30 October 1970.
[109] Ibid.

Perhaps as a reflection of the requests for assistance by men such as Valenzuela and, especially, Viaux, the U.S. realised that only an indigenous coup would be potentially desirable to American interests. Furthermore, the memo concludes that the UP government was inexorably sliding towards defeat in subsequent elections, and that the U.S. interests would be much better served by an elected successor regime than a regime produced by an armed coup.

It is often erroneously supposed that because of the U.S. support of Pinochet after he became dictator of Chile that the U.S. supported his coup planning from the start. Gabriel Kolko, for one, asserts that the CIA "did everything from maintaining constant contact with the coup plotters, whom it encouraged in every way...to drawing up arrest lists and the key targets to take when the coup began."[110] The Church Committee was more equivocal, but maintained the same spirit, when it wrote that "U.S. officials in the years before 1973 may not have always succeeded in walking the thin line between monitoring indigenous coup plotting and actually stimulating it."[111] It appears, however, that until the very day of the coup, neither the CIA nor any other U.S. government agency had a clear idea of the scope of contemporary coup plotting.

On May 2, 1973, Santiago reported to CIA headquarters some coup plotting information that they had recently received. The CIA contact in the Chilean army had reported that coup plotting was well advanced, that these plans had the input or support of most of the influential generals, and that "Allende would not last another 30 days in office." More importantly, however, is what the Chilean contact says about Augusto Pinochet, army general and would-be Junta President: "Pinochet will not be a stumbling block to the coup plans"[112]; another general , Manuel Torres, would lead the coup, Simply, no one knew the intentions of the famously inscrutable General Pinochet. In their intelligence gathering after the inauguration of Allende, the CIA had identified Pinochet (who replaced Valenzuela as *Jefe del Plaza* in early 1971) as an important figure within the Chilean military. It was noted then that he was a "narrow-gauge military man...who clearly enjoyed feeling of being important." [113] Nevertheless, the report noted that Pinochet avoided making any provocative statements and that he "is cautious and quiet on political matters." Overall, the assessment in 1971 was very similar to the one reached two years earlier: "[assess] subject as person who could possibly be neutralized by conspiratorial group but who would not lead any coup."[114]

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[110] Kolko, p. 220.
[111] "Covert Action in Chile", p. 33.

The next step in the evolution of Pinochet from unknown army general to integral anti-*Allendista* happened in late 1972, undoubtedly mirroring the worsening of the domestic situation. It had come to the CIA's attention that there was increased coup plotting going on amongst the junior officers of the Chilean forces, prompted by the high command's 'compliance' with Allende policies. Pinochet, it was noted, though "previously the strict constitutionalist" was now "harboring second thoughts."[115] Allende would have to be forced to step down or be 'eliminated.' One may still note, however, that Pinochet is still not touted as the leader of this coup, merely 'Prats Man' and a loyal soldier. This impression was reinforced when Pinochet, along with Prats, led the soldiers that put down the abortive uprising of June 29, 1973.[116]

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[112] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Was sent to the Case Officer", 02 May 73.
[113] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Pinochet at Dinner 5 August 1971", 6 August 1971
[114] Ibid.
[115] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Gave Following Impression", 27 September 1972.
[116] Faundez, p. 245.

As they was no foreknowledge of the Junta general's involvement in the coup, there was also precious little intelligence on when and where the coup was going to happen. That a coup was going to take place was about the only sure knowledge—and one did not need to be a CIA operative to surmise this much.[117] On August 3, 1973, the CIA received intelligence that the PCCh had received warning of a coup attempt that would be carried out "this week" by "unnamed military leaders."[118] It is interesting to note that this intelligence came not from CIA contacts in the military but through informants in the UP. The CIA 'comment' at the end of this memorandum is deleted, unfortunately, denying the reader any hint if the CIA knew of these plans from other quarters. Regardless, there is no other CIA intelligence report about this erstwhile-coup. Likewise, on September 7, 1973, only four days before the fatal coup, an inter-departmental meeting could not achieve a consensus on what was going to happen in Chile. While the CIA representative believed that a 'creeping coup' might occur (where Allende's military cabinet slowly took control), the State department representative "felt that if circumstances continued to deteriorate an armed coup might be more likely."[119] In retrospect, the initial indications of a solid coup climate emerged September 8, when it was reported by the CIA that the Chilean Navy planned to overthrow Allende on the early morning of September 10. It was thought by the CIA that the Navy would initiate the revolt by seizing control of a province, and would then be joined by the Air Force and perhaps even the Army: the Air Force C-in-C contacted General Pinochet, the new Army C-in-C, and reported that Pinochet would "not oppose the navy's action."[120] The Army, it was said, *might* join the coup after the Air Force did, but their generals might not: this was hardly hard evidence of a coordinated coup. Nonetheless, the CIA was sure that "President Allende is unquestionably confronted with the most serious threat from the Armed Forces to his continuance in office since his election...."[121]

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[117] See *Le Monde*, 25 August 1973. As printed in Kalfon, p. 239.
[118] Memorandum, Intelligence Report, "PS Leader Clodomiro Almayda Informed", 03 August 1973.
[119] Memorandum, "ARA/CIA Meeting", 11 September 1970.
[120] Memorandum, Intelligence Report, "According to the Navy", 8 September 1973.

This report of September 8 notwithstanding, the first hard intelligence about the September 11 coup arrived only the day before. A CIA intelligence report of September 10 indicated that intelligence had been received and "that a coup attempt will be initiated on September 11. All three branches of the armed forces and the Carabineros are involved in this action."[122] The CIA was, however, still sceptical, noting that this attempt was apparently supposed to have been undertaken on September 10 but had been delayed to improve the tactical situation. It was thought that Allende's planned national address on the afternoon of September 10 might be used "to announce some dramatic proposal such as the calling of a plebiscite which could again cause the plotters to hesitate."[123] Indeed, this was Allende's plan, though the speech, which was to be read on the 11th, was never given the chance to be heard.

While there is a small chance that these sceptical messages are plotted dissembling, it is more likely that U.S. intelligence on the coup plotters was minimal. It also seems that the earliest *direct* contact with the coup plotters came as late as September 10, 1973, probably only hours after the message mentioned above, when it was reported to Kissinger by the CIA that a contact in the Chilean military met with a CIA agent to advise the U.S. that: "early 11 September 1973 a significant part of the

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[121] Ibid.
[122] Memorandum, Intelligence Report, "That a coup attempt will be initiated", 10 September 1973.
[123] Ibid.

Chilean military planned to move to overthrow President Allende." [124] The Chilean officer then asked if the US would provide support to the coup if the situation became 'difficult.' The agent, it is reported, responded by telling the Chilean officer that "the planned action against President Allende was a Chilean operation, and he [CIA agent] could only promise that [security deletion] question would promptly be made known to Washington."[125]

Even though the CIA learned of these coup efforts too late to affect them, there was continued interest in the CIA, especially amongst the Chilean country-team, to foster a coup in the national chaos of late August, 1973. On the resignation of General Prats from Cabinet, the CIA in Chile believed that the Allende government was in such a shaky position that "significant events or pressures could effect its future."[126] The time was ripe, the station urged, for the CIA to support a major move by the opposition (including the private sector) to force on the government an emergency military cabinet that would administer the country until stability was restored. There was a danger: "While this is probably the most realistic objective, it should be borne in mind that events may carry the armed forces beyond this point to that of a full military takeover."[127] Despite all the pressure to avoid direct connection to any coup plotter, the CIA would still have been happy if a coup had occurred. Reporting the station plan Colby assured Kissinger that "the Santiago station would not be working directly with the armed forces in an attempt to bring about a coup nor would its support to the overall opposition forces have this as its objective."[128] There is no response to this memorandum, though it is doubtful that there was sufficient time for a new directive before the coup was executed. Regardless, the memorandum from Colby shows that the CIA, up to the last moments of the Allende regime, were not involved in coup plotting, and indeed were avoiding any move that might indicate to the Chileans that they favoured one.

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[124] Memorandum, CIA (via Mr. William Jorden, NSC) to Kissinger, "Possible Request for U.S. Government Aid", 10 September 1970. This is a direct telegram that would have gone directly from Santiago to Washington and Langley. The 'intelligence report' in note 49 would have been prepared in Langley from intelligence sent from Santiago the previous day.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Opposition Parties Are Maintaining", 24 August 1973.

[127] Ibid.

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Despite a continuing desire to see the collapse of the Allende government, in the three years from his election to his death the, U.S. government carried out no action against the Chilean government that could not be justified within the norms of international banking or trade law, and produced no policy with the direct intent of promoting a coup. More specifically, the CIA did nothing to promote a coup against the Allende government. Indeed, so careful were the CIA in avoiding the appearance of favouring a coup that they had trouble predicting the timing and nature of the coup that did occur. Ultimately, the CIA played the central role in a U.S. policy designed to prevent the extinction of Chile's unique democracy, which was under a clear attack by Allende's aggressively Marxist government. The Americans did operate against the Allende government, but not to engineer his death. William Colby described the American efforts best, in a secret post-coup cable to Henry Kissinger: "While the agency was instrumental in enabling opposition political parties and media to survive and to maintain their dynamic resistance to the Allende regime, the CIA played no direct role in the events which led to the establishment of the new military government."[129]

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[128] Memorandum, William Colby to Kissinger, "Proposed Covert Financial Support of Chilean Private Sector", 25 August 1973.

In his book *The Night Watch*, former CIA CWH/D David Phillips recounts the difficulty in managing the CIA effort in Chile. On the one hand the CIA agents were expected to 'ring the bell', or to ensure proper warning to the U.S. government of any attempted coup in Chile. On the other hand, it had been pointed out that in the inevitable event of a coup in Chile, the CIA would be accused of complicity. It was ultimately ordered that discretion was to trump forewarning: the CIA wanted to keep its hands clean in a time when the agency was under increased scrutiny.[130] The result of this policy is what is described above; an attempt to gather information from the margins, on very secret coup plots, without leaving any impressions of favouring a coup.

The discretion by the CIA did not pay off. As Mark Falcoff has pointed out in his book on the subject, the Church Committee report imputes, without supporting logic or evidence, that the CIA supported and perhaps even helped plot the coup. Falcoff has attempted to refute these claims and does so with remarkable skill. Like many others writing on the topic, Falcoff was limited by not having access to the full range of documents quoted, or more importantly *not* quoted by the Church Committee Report. Access to these documents sheds much needed light on the topic, and subsequently reveals the partisan nature of that report and vindicates Falcoff's rejection of its rhetoric. Moreover, by looking at these documents one is able to determine the exact nature of the U.S. relation with those who launched the coup in September of 1973 in detail not achievable until the declassification of the CIA and NSC archives. They remove any doubt—a doubt exploited by such works as Hersh's *The Price of Power*[131]—to the CIA and Kissinger's assertion that they had no connection, and barely any knowledge, of the coup that ousted Allende.

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[129] Memorandum, Colby to Kissinger, "CIA's Covert Action Program", 19 September 1973.
[130] Phillips, p. 238.

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[131] Hersh, p. 295. Here one reads of the famous arrest lists and 'almost daily reports of coups.' Reporting the plots, the CIA's function, is imputed by Hersh to directly correlate with their plotting.

Conclusion

New Debates

> Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got
> without merit, and lost without deserving.
> --Shakespeare, *Othello.*

The topic of CIA covert action and the fall of Salvador Allende's government is a politically charged issue. It is the focus of much emotion and political belief about the mercies and cruelties of power-politics. Simultaneously, it deals with matters that cut to the core of American foreign policy. The details of this study point, in the greater picture, to a particular question of American foreign policy posture: was what the Americans attempted in Chile from 1970 to 1973 an act of 'rollback' or an act of containment? Essentially, were they interested observers to a vicious political play, or were they, like Iago, active plotters seeking a foul end to an innocent leader? The answer, as it is bound to be with such a charged question, is very complex.

The initial American efforts against Allende, from the end of 1969 to September 1970, can not be described as terribly exciting or wholly sinister: they sought by covert manipulation to prevent by constitutional means the inauguration of a president who did not have a clear mandate. The CIA unsuccessfully tried to influence the Chilean elections in favour of a centrist government. Subsequent to that election, in a short and confused period of time, they sought to implement the 'Rube Goldberg' plot, with predictable failure the result of their overly complex plan. The key characters who would have been able to see President Frei re-elected after a short interregnum did not act due to the domestic political obstacles in the path of the plan. Though inter-agency squabbling hampered the initial American efforts, the root of the American failure in the election and Congressional-vote period was that they did not act with the decisiveness or aggression required to overcome the pro-Marxist trend in Chilean politics. American efforts failed because they did not realise that their efforts towards containment had already ceased to be effective.

Only when the 'Track I' efforts failed did the Americans flirt with the idea of 'rollback'. Under the pressure of the strongly anti-Communist Nixon the CIA explored the options for a coup against Allende. The CIA, not willingly in all cases, sought to identify reliable Chileans with the willingness, means and wherewithal to overthrow the Allende government and establish a non-dictatorial pro-U.S. regime. These efforts, however, ran straight into the wall of impossibility. No one in Chile was willing to play along, and those who were willing were insane and uncontrollable. General Valenzuela, the only likely candidate to lead domestic forces, could not or would not lead a violent revolt against the Allende government. General Viaux, who was all too happy to lead a violent coup, was shunned by the Americans, and it is this wild-cannon who killed the unfortunate General Schneider, not the CIA. The idea of rollback was pursued, but it was never taken to its full execution.

The failure of 'Track II' and, perhaps, lingering images of the Bay of Pigs,[1] led to a more circumspect approach, one where the U.S. sought only to contain Allende within the constitutional structure of Chile: a bi-cameral multi-party structure with a vigourous opposition and free press. This is ultimately what led to Allende's downfall, for while he was undoubtedly a Marxist, he sought a non-Leninist method to achieving a Marxist state. The result was that he was unwilling to decisively and violently liquidate Chile's democratic structure, yet it would not fail under his indirect attacks. With a shattered economy and massive civil unrest, the Army made a choice and that choice was against Allende. Does the U.S. therefore take some responsibility for Allende's ouster? Perhaps, but their participation was so minimal that it is not necessarily a responsibility that they must disguise. Do they bear responsibility for the post-coup dictatorship? No. They barely knew a coup was coming.

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[1] Cable, Santiago Station to CIA HQ, "Ambassador called in Defence Attache and DCOS", 08 October 1970.

In his recent study *Operations Against Enemy Leaders*, Stephen Hosmer stated the following about American behaviour during the Cold War:

> Occasionally, U.S. decisionmakers have concluded that a regime posed a sufficient threat to U.S. national interests that it merited overthrow. During the Cold War, concerns about expanding communist lodgments in the Third World led the United States to seek the ouster of governments deemed already committed to Moscow or likely to fall within the Soviet Orbit.[2]

Does Chile fit into this criteria posed by Hosmer? Did the Americans actively seek an end to the Allende regime by *any means*? Were they responsible for the coup and did they support it from the start? The answer, as the archives show, is no. While there was a brief flirtation with plotting and assassinations, following October/November 1970 the CIA were there in a much more passive role. The U.S. did not actively contribute to the coup that toppled Salvador Allende.

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[2] Stephen T. Hosmer, *Operations Against Enemy Leaders* (Santa Monica, 2001), p. 3.

As the Soviets recognised and his opposition exploited, Allende fell because he was unable to expand his power base outside the executive.[3] In this case, one could argue that the U.S. was indeed responsible for the fall of Allende, for they succeeded—to what precise extent it is impossible to gauge—in maintaining the democratic opposition. That Allende was too weak or indecisive of a leader to move quickly against the Chilean constitutional structure was thus exploited by a democratic opposition that held a strong suit of cards; while Allende waddled along with a fractured cabinet, his economy collapsed, the important sectors of the population rioted and he lost control of the organs of government. The U.S. is not responsible for this—recall that they did not fund the most decisive of these strikes, that of the truckers' union[4]—but American influence most likely did contribute to the speed of events. In the end, however, we must side with one American official who stated that "Chile is a country with an extremely complicated social and political history and what happened in Chile was a result of that history—it was not due to external influences, ours or anybody else's."[5]

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The CIA as Bogeyman

Regardless of opinions like those just quoted, there remains the persistent impression—of which Chile acts as a common example—of the CIA as a dangerous and almost independent branch of the U.S. Government. When one discusses the CIA it is not uncommon to hear two opposing opinions held simultaneously. The first is that they are a gang of bumbling fools, unable to maintain security of their own operations, prone to oversights and childlike pratfalls. This opinion argues that they are slaves to their anti-communist sentiments but adolescent in their planning abilities. The opposing belief held as strongly goes to the effect that they are an organization of nefarious evil geniuses, constantly and effectively plotting the downfall of any government that opposes the hegemony of the United States. At least one of these opinions must be false. It is arguable, in light of the programmes in Chile, that both positions are indefensible. The CIA agents operating in Chile were men like any other men. They had no ability to alter the opinions and beliefs of the Chileans, a people as independent, educated and proud as any in the world. They had personal beliefs strong enough to keep them from supporting a coup by an announced Fascist, General Viaux. They could not see into secret plots or underground organizations by merely looking.

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[3] Miller, p. 135.

[4] Memorandum, William Colby to Kissinger, "CIA's Covert Action Programme Chile", 13 September 1973. See Chapter 4, note 96.

They were, no doubt, very professional men. They organised, over the course of three years, the movement of over $8 million to the political parties and newspapers of Chile, all the while keeping the matter secret. Such an effort is considered by the CIA to be one of the most difficult operations to execute, as even the slightest hint of American support will compromise the party that is being supported.[6] Yet, they operated a string of Chilean agents that must have been numerous, as well as dozens of American agents, and so far as is known not a single one was arrested or 'turned'. Yet despite the dollars, the skill, and the will, the Americans in the end were not able to affect the course of actions in Chile. This is not because they were incompetent, or because their plans or methods

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[5] Statement of Harry W. Schlaudeman, "United States and Chile During the Allende Years,"p. 174.
[6] Holt, p. 145.

were unsound, but because the Chileans were and are autonomous beings with their own will, their own pride, their own deceit, and their own agendas. As President Eduardo Frei said, "The miracle of it all is not that the coup came after all, but that the military resisted civilian pressure as long as it did."[7]

Why does the majority of English-language scholarship on Chile dwell on alleged American wrongdoing? As has been discussed in this thesis, much of the existing scholarship on Chile relies on sources and opinions not updated since the 1970's, when much of the writing on American intelligence activities was aimed at exposing the alleged incompetencies, abuses and extremes of a government that was viewed as absolutist in tendency.[8] Times have changed, and as one writer on the topic has said, open discussion of intelligence matters is no longer a matter of scandal or titillation, but rather an integral part of the ongoing debate of national security issues.[9] Time has allowed not only a release of more documents but a different view of why nations conduct intelligence operations. With this perspective the views on American activities in Chile can finally be examined for their place in the development of American security and intelligence doctrines.

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[7] Falcoff, *Modern Chile,* "Interview with Former President Eduardo Frei," p. 317
[8] Ibid., p. xii
[9] Abram N. Shulsky and Gary J. Schmitt, *Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence* (Washington, 2002), p. xi.

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CIA, State, and Decision-making

What can be said is that, despite a few short periods of internal confusion, the CIA's role in Chile was to conduct intelligence operations, designed to supply the foreign-policy and decision-making branches of the U.S. Government with the data they require to operate American policy effectively. Due to the particular circumstances of Chilean politics and society, and perhaps due to lessons-learned when dealing with Fidel Castro's Cuba, American activities in Chile were not aimed at 'rollback' of Communism in Latin America. All of this speaks to the usefulness of the CIA as an agent of U.S. foreign policy. If they were not able to alter the outcome of an election or to promote a coup, what were they capable of achieving? Essentially, the record shows that the CIA was instrumental in keeping the Chilean opposition financially viable against a government squeeze. Also, the CIA was able to funnel sufficient funds to the press to keep it functioning and free of government control. It is impossible to tell if American support was for these organizations was a major contributing factor in the coup, but it is certain that the aim was at containing the Allende government within its own constitution, and not at overthrowing the government. In their more subtle aim one sees the difficulty the CIA had in pursuing their main function as intelligence gatherers: due to the injunction against supporting coup-plotting the CIA was unable to see into the plots and determine the 'who what and when' of the coup. Hampered by a too-cautious policy, they were prevented from fulfilling their main function.

The actual mechanics of the execution of U.S. foreign policy also become clear in the examination of the CIA's actions in Chile. One sees a clear divide between the executive, the State Department and the CIA in both intent and action. The President and his cabinet level advisors, in the case of Chile, did not care about the domestic politics of Chile until it was too late and they then issued an overly-aggressive policy directive that ignored the realities of U.S. capabilities, the domestic situation in Chile and the short amounts of time available. Likewise, it was easy for the State Department to be dovish and restrained with their evaluations and recommendations on Chile, for they had no assets involved and did not have to execute any of their recommendations. They were able to make any sort of recommendation because if things went wrong they would not be to blame. For the CIA, however, covert operations in support of foreign policy directives were much trickier. They did not have the luxury to experiment with new methods of operations mandated by an outside department. When the State Department and the NSC ignored the CIA's recommendations for an early election effort, it was they who had to make good the resulting failure with a dangerous covert operation that eventually explored assassinations and coups. There is, unquestionably, a gap between the *intent* of direction given to the CIA and what can be and actually is *executed*. Certainly, as it regarded Chile, this gap could have been reduced. While the CIA must not produce U.S. policy, it most surely should have some meaningful input in its production.

One may also see 'between the lines' of these archival documents that there is a notable cultural difference between the CIA and the State Department, and this difference no doubt contributes to each of their roles in the U.S. decision-making process. In the

CIA one can see an organization with clear *detailed* view of the local situation, and no doubt 'up at the coal face' there was perceived the need for a fine balance between decisive action and professional circumspection. Without the former it was not worth being there, as half measures inevitably lead to failure. Without the latter, however, missions exploded in a most embarrassing fashion. Compare this view to that of the State Department, a more cautious organization. They maintained a better universal view of the situation, perceiving the nature of the geopolitical threat and the best posture against it. When it came to the execution of policy, however, their advice or plans of action were too subtle or too misdirected to be effective. A proper balance between the CIA and the State Department was not struck at any point covered by this thesis, but was perhaps most closely approached between January 1971 and September 1973. In this period, as the archives show, the CIA executed its most difficult and subtle actions in support of State Department policy. Nonetheless, as has been emphasised, the CIA did not predict, as is its duty, the coup led by Augusto Pinochet.

Some might argue that Chile is yet another example of the knee-jerk anti-communist reaction of the U.S. government, that both an attempt at rollback, as well as efforts at containment, were unnecessary. This school would argue that the Americans turned the mole-hill of a Marxist Chile into a mountain of Communist progress in the Americas. The answer to this is 'who knows.' It is easy for the academic, thirty years *post facto*, to argue that the Soviets were no substantive threat in the American hemisphere. Governments, however, do not have the luxury of getting the perfect answer too late, super power governments especially. Essentially, they must take the worst-case scenario into account as they plan their foreign policy. For a government fighting what they perceived as a life and death struggle for their state, the luxury of the perfect answer to a political problem was always trumped by the need for a workable answer *right now*. It is vogue to accuse the agencies of the U.S. government, like the CIA, of basing their threat assessments on *a priori* ideological convictions, but the archives do not bear this out. More clearly, the CIA and State Department based their decisions on solid but necessarily incomplete information, and moved to reasonable conclusions that required immediate action. Allende was clearly a Marxist, openly anti-American, and specifically interested in the deconstruction of liberal democracy in Latin America. To have sat around, inactive, waiting for *proof* of this would have been irresponsible.

If one can judge such things by the printed words of an archive, the individual actors in the U.S. Government were sincerely concerned about balance of power in Latin America, a region of immediate importance to American security. Any established state pursuing an anti-American programme with Soviet support would be a destabilizing element. It was therefore important for long-run American national security to prevent the establishment of the Allende regime. There is very little to indicate the U.S. government or CIA had any personal motive to act against Allende. Some may attempt to accuse the U.S. Government of reacting to the whims of narrow capitalist interests in their Chilean operations, as they did with the United Fruit Company in Guatemala in the 1950's. While the archives show that the CIA had only the barest awareness of the demands of such companies as ITT, Anaconda Mining and other large U.S. interests, a detailed study of this relationship would certainly be enlightening.

It is dilemmas like this that merit further research. Obviously, this thesis is not an exhaustive study of American foreign policy towards Chile in the Allende period.

Regardless, the new archival data available has made it possible to re-examine many aspects of American covert action in this period and after. Indeed, the Chile Collection makes possible a re-evaluation of American support for the Pinochet regime and its aims and motivations for doing so. One may also examine the technical aspects of the CIA's covert operations, focusing on their techniques and methods. On a grander scale, there is room to enrich our knowledge of how the CIA worked with other government departments, most importantly the State Department, and how these relationships affected CIA operations. What the Chile Collection allows is a look into the (relatively) candid thoughts and actions of individual players in the intelligence game as the game was being played. Such a view cannot help but increase our knowledge of the field.

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